

More
Yesterdays

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
REBEKAH KOHUT



PLEASE HANDLE
WITH CARE

University of
Connecticut Libraries



hbl, stx

HQ 1413.K6A32

More yesterdays,



3 9153 00558342 4

HQ/1413/K6/A32

Rab

4/34

More Yesterdays

Books by Rebekah Kohut

MY PORTION: An Autobiography

AS I KNOW THEM

HIS FATHER'S HOUSE: The story of George Alexander Kohut

MORE YESTERDAYS

MORE YESTERDAYS

An Autobiography

(1925-49)

A Sequel to *My Portion*

by

REBEKAH KOHUT

Foreword by

FANNIE HURST

NEW YORK

BLOCH PUBLISHING COMPANY

1950

Copyright, 1950, by
ALEXANDER KOHUT MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED
TO THE MEMORY
OF A
DEAR FRIEND
AND
GREAT LEADER
STEPHEN S. WISE

FOREWORD

More Yesterdays is the continuation-story of Rebekah Kohut's *My Portion*.

Like its memorable predecessor, it is the story of the glowing spirit of a woman whose life has been one of passionate self-dedication. Obviously, this has not been the author's intent. Any such self-conscious attempt would have spelled hazard.

But without her consciousness, certainly without her purpose, the gem-like flame of the Rebekah Kohut spirit shines through.

Her story is a history of a broad, compassionate, human soul within a lovely and loved lady.

More Yesterdays is as packed with paradox as Rebekah herself. As modern as Park Avenue, as ancient as Israel, here is a woman who, as she passed this way, enriched her era.

Born in Hungary, reared in America in a warm, middle-class family environment, her spirit rises back in Egypt, crosses red seas, hot sands, yesterday's seven thousand years and marches on and on.

Bristling with Americana, the underground river of Rebekah Kohut's story, which for the most part runs beneath city-asphalt, flows out of the antiquity of her race.

Written in the technocratic heart of the largest

city in the world, the spirit of its author stems back into the Old Testament. *More Yesterdays* describes with wit, spirituality, and strange wisdom, a life that has been lived within the marts of men and the ivory tower of the spirit.

Variously and realistically, Rebekah Kohut has lived in Richmond, Virginia; Baltimore, Maryland; and San Francisco. She has known the life of European capitals. Lecturer, social worker, mother of a large and distinguished brood of children, daughter of a rabbi, wife of one, step-mother of a scholar and educator, friend and associate of Orientalists, Hebraists, and men of various cloths and walks of life, she has lived the exciting life of intensive service.

And again, anachronistically, most of all, she has dwelt chiefly within that ivory tower of the spirit.

More Yesterdays was written in that tower.

Hers, in its modern way, parallels the story of Esther and Ruth. It is the story of the tribes of women who trekked the burning desert-sands. It is the story of the passionate Zionist. And last, it is the story which rings with the newly exultant note of Israel.

It is the story of a woman in step with her time, occasionally a bit ahead of it, but whose race-consciousness dates straight as an arrow back to the beginnings.

There is tiredness in this book. There is sadness

in it. The wise sadden. Its wisdoms are not those of the Orientalist, Hebraist, or the academician. Here are the wisdoms of the spirit, the wisdoms of those who live by more than bread alone.

More Yesterdays is a narrative of a mother of Israel and a mother of men.

FANNIE HURST

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
	FOREWORD BY FANNIE HURST .	vii
I	IN WHICH I DON'T REMEMBER —MUCH	3
II	“THE FUNNY HUMANITARIAN TYPE”	15
III	DYING OF COMMITTEES . . .	30
IV	AN ASSORTMENT OF LEGACIES .	38
V	THREE ZIONIST SAINTS	46
VI	IMPERIALISMS CLEAN AND UN- CLEAN	60
VII	“THEIR OTHER MOTHER” . . .	68
VIII	THE KOHUT FOUNDATION . . .	74
IX	“THE WOMAN RICH IN TIME” .	88
X	HATS, ROOSEVELTS, AND A LIT- TLE GIRL	93
XI	A SPIRITUAL HERO	100
XII	VISITORS TO A SICKBED	110
XIII	FROM COUNCIL TO WORLD CON- GRESS	120

CHAPTER		PAGE
XIV	TITLES AND TITLES	131
XV	HISTORY VIA HOUSES	133
XVI	MEMORIES OUT OF SEASON	154
XVII	THE QUALITY OF JEWISHNESS	163
XVIII	CAMPS AND SCHOOLS	174
XIX	FINAL REFLECTIONS	187
	ADDENDA	206

More Yesterdays

I

IN WHICH I DON'T REMEMBER—MUCH

REMINISCENCE is a curious thing. Twenty-five years ago, during a confining illness, I wrote and published an autobiography, *My Portion*. I was fifty-nine then. Now, having been again confined to my bed for a mere six years, I have decided to occupy myself with another autobiography, this one telling the tale of the last twenty-five years. My mind tells me, as does my doctor, that such an occupation would be a good thing for me. But my memory plays me stubborn tricks. It persists in dwelling on things that happened not ten or twenty years ago, but fifty and seventy-five years ago. I say to my memory, "Please, please, come away from 1873 and the Grant Administration. That was all covered in *My Portion*, remember? Come into the Twenties and Thirties with Coolidge, Hoover and Roosevelt." But my memory does not obey too readily.

My memory and I are going to have some battles, I can see.

I remember yesterday, of course. And the day before. All recent days are pretty much alike. My

day begins at 1 A.M., four hours after I have been tucked away for the night. I have two nurses, and every night at 9 P.M. we go through the same ritual. One of these nurses is a Catholic, the other is a Protestant. I am Jewish. The three of us join hands and we say, "Endless is Thy mercy, O Heavenly Father, in Thee we trust forevermore." I say it in Hebrew. And then I say, "Good night, God bless all dear ones, and God bless you who care for me, and send His divine blessing over the whole world." Lights out.

Four hours later I am awake, and each time I face the problem of what to do with the darkness. I go in for informal prayer, which helps. I answer letters written to me forty years ago. I explain to someone fifty years in the grave that I am terribly sorry I forgot all about that appointment. I dance in Richmond, climb hills in San Francisco, get married in Baltimore, and lots of other things.

Because of a hip broken six years ago, and not mended properly, I am unable to move without help. When morning comes my nurses lift me out of bed and put me in a chair for breakfast. There I read the mail and look at the morning papers. Then it's back to bed and the telephone begins ringing. It's always a physical effort, but I insist on answering it myself. My daughters calling. My sister calling. Friends. Associates.

In the afternoon I usually have several visitors for brief periods, dictate a few letters, and make

some telephone calls myself. Most of these calls have to do with getting jobs for people. In my early twenties I became a one-woman public employment bureau. Later, I helped organize municipal and federal employment agencies. At eighty-four, I am still getting jobs for people. I am usually full of all kinds of decorum and reservations, but when it comes to securing work for someone, I don't mind whom I pester.

The one difficulty now is that my voice has become so low that people at the other end of the wire can hardly hear it. Sometimes they don't hear it at all and they hang up, thinking the phone has rung by mistake. So I ring them back again and try to lift my voice into an audible whisper. One nice thing about a telephone whisper is that it sounds so confidential and dramatic. When I whisper, "It's a fine day," I have a notion that the party at the other end feels he is being let in on a great secret. He virtually promises not to breathe a word about it to anyone.

The ancient Greeks had a saying that a life must not be judged until it is finished, and the manner of its finishing is important. Other sages have said that one must live each day as though it were the last day. I live that way perforce, because at my age and in my condition any day might be my last. Certainly I behave very well; there is no other way for me to behave.

What probably started me off on these memoirs which don't remember (not yet, anyway) was a letter I received two months ago from someone in San Diego, California. On the envelope it said, "If deceased, please return to sender." My correspondent in his letter remarked that he had addressed the envelope that way because he hadn't seen my name in the papers in some years, which made him wonder if I were still among the living. This rather aroused what little of my spirit is available to me nowadays for indignation—as if being in the papers were a sign of being alive.

No, my name isn't in the papers, but it would be a pleasant surprise if I could at least run across the names of friends and neighbors in the papers occasionally (in something besides the obituary columns). In the newspapers of smaller communities one can still learn about the activities of friends, but this is a lost pleasure in New York, where the papers (at least the ones I read) seem to be published mainly as a record of the World Crisis rather than for the day-by-day pleasure of people living in New York.

The standards of journalism are much higher today, but in certain respects the New York papers of fifty years ago were far more satisfactory to New Yorkers. They acknowledged the existence of Europe, Asia, Africa, but most of their space was given to the doings of local folk, and by the law of averages these included quite a few people

I knew and others I felt I knew. Many colorful characters cavorted through the news columns—interesting ones, pompous ones, foolish ones, delightful ones, and what not. Somebody was always being interviewed about something or nothing, or was getting into a public rage, or standing on his head in Madison Square, and there were plenty of local controversies that had their dramatic and comical aspects.

The papers even went in for presenting communal clowns of their own creation. The "New York Sun," for example, projected a whole imps' gallery of delightful characters with whom it and its readers had fun—The Mayor of Chinatown, the Duke of Essex Street, Wireless Louie, and a host of others. *The World*, the *Tribune*, even the ever-serious *Times*, had their favorite characters and trotted them out regularly.

In the news columns Theodore Roosevelt, whether in or out of office, was always up to something and was describing it in picturesque, pungent language. Dr. Parkhurst, or the police chief, Big Bill Devery, were always good for a blast, and there was John Armstrong Chaloner—"Who's looney now?"—and Dr. Pease, the anti-cigarette crusader who used to write letters to himself under a female pseudonym praising his own work; and later we had an erudite mayor, William J. Gaynor, who used to write long, irate letters to citizens in which he bombarded them with the

Greek and Latin classics, intertwining Epictetus with the city's water supply and Plutarch with garbage removal.

This kind of news helped give the feeling that ours was a warm, intimate community, for all of its size. But most of that seems to be gone now.

I remember a play some years ago in which a character expressed his bitter disappointment every time he bought a paper and looked at the front page. When he paid his two or three cents he expected and hoped that the leading story would be somehow about himself (he was a basket weaver, or cafeteria worker, or something, but he was necessarily the most important person in the world to himself, and he didn't have a paper of his own in which this fact could appear regularly, so he had to buy the *News* or the *World-Telegram*). He was always disappointed, of course, for the leading story, instead of being about him, was about Hitler or Stalin or Churchill or Roosevelt—obviously secondary or tertiary characters in this particular man's world. He was quite right, but what could he do about it?

I, myself, am disappointed every day as I look for news of friends and neighbors. Of the present characters who dominate the news, few are friends or neighbors of mine. They are simply different levers or push-buttons of The Crisis—the symbols of One World—that is, One World of Trouble.

For example, here is this morning's paper,

heavy with news and advertising. Eight stories in which union leaders demand justice for their workers, or they'll strike. Eight other stories in which employers demand justice against the unions. Full-page advertisements by employers and unions arguing their cases, as if they were announcing rival basement bargain sales in ethics. Five separate stories in which members of Congress denounce the Administration. Five other stories in which Administration Congressmen defend the Administration and denounce the Opposition. Dozens of long dispatches from abroad in which statesmen in different countries castigate each other as a menace to peace. Then there are the columnists, all taking themselves very seriously, and all talking about the same deadly things that are in the rest of the paper.

These are not people as I remember them. This is the Pot and the Kettle. This is Tweedledum and Tweedledee with a vengeance. That is what the age has become.

A sickbed, traditionally, is supposed to be a kind of reviewing stand, before which the parading patient, bedecked in her past, passes in review before the recumbent patient and receives medals or blame. Something about a sick-bed (if the illness isn't too crucial) is supposed to render its occupant detached and above the battle, to give her clarity of vision she usually doesn't enjoy in

health. All I can say is that clarity of vision comes at the wrong end. I could have used it better at twenty-four than at eighty-four. But if it had been given me at twenty-four, I would, no doubt, have rejected it and followed my emotions—and I would probably have been right in doing so.

When I was twenty-four, I married a widower with eight children. In the seventh wonderful year of our married life my husband died. I did not marry again, but devoted the rest of my life to my husband's family, and in time became a matriarch without ever having had any children of my own. The remaining children are now in their sixties and seventies, most of them grandparents, and to this day I worry and fuss about them as if they still had their lives and futures to make.

Eight children at once are something—especially the job of managing them. To this day I feel I did rather well. The proof of it is in the relations that have been maintained. I do not believe that many mothers have had the respect and love that the children of Alexander Kohut have given me. And I am grandmother now to so many fine human beings, and receive such affection from them, that I feel blessed beyond all deserts.

I am a rabbi's daughter, I married a rabbi, and I acquired a rabbi for a son. All three men were

exceptional. Just remembering them gives me a glow and a thrill.

My father, Albert Siegfried Bettelheim, who began his career in Hungary, brought us to the United States after the Civil War. He ministered to congregations in Philadelphia, Richmond, San Francisco, and Baltimore. Being physician in addition to rabbi (a tradition in his family) he was both spiritual and physical healer—and a scholar and writer as well. He was friend to numerous members of the Christian clergy and helped a good many of them in their studies of Hebrew. One of his best friends was James Cardinal Gibbons, whom he knew first as Bishop of Richmond and later as Cardinal in Baltimore—probably the most distinguished prelate in the history of the Catholic Church in America. Bishop Gibbons lived across the street from us in Richmond and was frequently at our house, often discussing his Hebrew studies with my father. He is one of the first memories of my childhood.

My husband, Alexander Kohut, was a great rabbi of Hungary and America, and one of the most renowned scholars in the history of Jewish learning—inspiring in the pulpit, profound at the writing table, a man of beauty who retained the heart of a child to the last. Whoever knew him through his life loved him, and it was my privilege at the end to know him best of all. Prodigious in everything, he worked twenty-five years at one

monumental task which has become a landmark in Jewish learning. In his Hungarian days he grew to be idolized by his people and admired by the other Hungarian leaders—he was the friend of the great Hungarian revolutionary patriot, Kosuth. In America later, where he espoused the cause of traditional Judaism against the attacks of Jewish reform, he was revered even by his opponents.

My son, George Alexander Kohut, tried to follow in his father's footsteps. He became a rabbi and scholar too, but ill health forced him to give up the rabbinate. He continued with scholarship and produced voluminously and well, but his main passion was in aiding other scholars to get their work published (in memory of his father's own early difficulties in that respect). In the gaining of a livelihood, he founded and conducted boys' camps and boys' schools, and for the last dozen years of his life he owned and administered the oldest private school in New York City—the Columbia Grammar School. The income from these activities he devoted to the creation and maintenance of two projects. One was the Alexander Kohut Memorial Foundation, which was dedicated to the furthering of Hebrew and Oriental scholarship. It made grants to scholars, printed their works, established scholarships for such studies at various universities. Before the Hitler eruption there were branches of the Kohut Foundation

in Berlin, Vienna, Budapest, as well as in London, New York, Jerusalem; and in each of these centers the Foundation made possible the issuance of learned works that might otherwise never have seen the light of day. The Foundation also established a scholarship at Yale University and sponsored the publication of important works in the Yale Oriental Series.

The other monument my son George left is the Alexander Kohut Memorial Collection in the Yale Library. For this he donated to Yale the great libraries collected by his father and himself, including many rare books and precious ancient manuscripts, and for twenty years thereafter he was on a constant hunt to find more treasures to add to the Yale collection.

These three men were my main heritage. I have had a life of my own in communal activities, but I can confidently say that everything I have ever done had its source in their inspiration and memory.

When my husband died I became, in addition to everything else, the family's chief breadwinner. I founded schools and camps, just as my son did later; and succeeded with both; and I managed also to find the time for a good deal of civic and national social work. As I look at it now, and consider all the different things I did, I don't know whether to be fascinated or appalled at my energy. But the sum of what I remember—and that in-

cludes all the worries and heartaches—is that it was wonderful, and so I conclude that I was born for work and was unhappy unless I was getting more than my apportioned share of it. It must have even been a contributing factor in my eagerness to marry Alexander Kohut. Having been given eight children at once, I didn't have to look for work; I had it.

II

"THE FUNNY HUMANITARIAN TYPE"

WHEN I think of the years after I wrote *My Portion*, I know they were very busy years, with many happinesses and sorrows, and yet they appear to me now in solid masses which I have to break up and separate. There is a famous passage in Proust which tells how eating one little madeleine cake evoked enough memories to keep the author writing all night and all week. M. Proust could always eat his cake and write it, and one cake was apparently good for a hundred pages of reminiscence. But cakes have no such magic power of evocation for me, and I wish there were some other open sesame to that part of my past that I am trying to get down on paper.

Being too old and too sick to travel, I have not personally seen any of the ravages of the Hitler era, although I lived through them in their horrors, as so many Americans did, by report. I did see the devastation and destitution in Europe after the First World War, and I thought at that time that nothing could be worse.

A million people had been killed by roving

bandits and pillagers in Eastern Europe, mainly in the Ukraine, the Baltic States and parts of Poland. There were refugee camps, and plenty of what in a later generation we called Displaced Persons, and starving children, and great cities in which the entire population was suffering from malnutrition. I and my associates in the Council of Jewish Women did what we could in various centers to better the morale among refugees who had no place to go and no future whatever.

We were full of hope in those days. Europe had paid a terrible price for the power ambitions of its rulers, but with the close of the war many of us were confident that after such sufferings there must be a new era. We nursed the illusion that wars and oppressions came mainly because of kings wanting to play God, and now that the kings were gone and the people were in their place, things would be better, for the people could be trusted. We had yet to see the phenomenon of the people wanting to play both king and God.

We hoped, at any rate, that persecutions of minorities would be at an end. At the Peace Treaty of Paris a clause had been introduced which safeguarded minorities, and several new countries which had been given their independence had pledged adherence to this clause. As it turned out, the assurance was on paper but nowhere else. Independence doesn't always bring greatness of soul. And in our lifetime we have seen majorities which

began by persecuting minorities and which ended by persecuting themselves.

I was always fascinated by my son George. When I first met him he was twelve years old and already his father's shadow. He was actually protective toward his father, as if he were his father's older brother. He was always trying to help him, spare him, do some of his work. I have never seen more devotion. And in his later years, in maturity, his devotion to scholars (as many as possible) seemed to me to be a continuation and extension of his devotion to his father.

In the pursuance of a livelihood George was keen, efficient, successful, but he was not dazzled by himself in that role. He was not impressed by captains of industry or politicians or the socially eminent. Let him but see a venerable scholar, however—someone who had worked for many years, commentating an ancient book or reconstructing a lost alphabet—and George would look upon him with awe, and would not be content until he had been of some service to him. Scholars saw this in George, and they warmed up to him instantly; he was their public. Indeed, this got to be so well known that when George arrived in some European capital his hotel was soon a Mecca for Orientalists, Hebraists, archaeologists, lexicographers, bibliophiles. He would have them all to lunch, dinner, breakfast, lunch. I found it very confus-

ing sometimes—one of the guests would order his meal from the waiter in Aramaic—but George was completely in his element and loved it. He was his own kind of big-game hunter who was not happy on an expedition unless he could snare a few precious books or manuscripts that he could give to Yale, or had found and subsidized someone working on an ancient text that might have twenty learned readers when it was completed after twenty years.

George, obviously, belonged to the Book-of-the-Century Club. His one exception was detective stories, which he read for his insomnia. It was common for him, when reading these, to fly into a great rage. When he identified the murderer in an early chapter he felt he had definitely been cheated, and he was quite capable of writing to the publisher and complaining that the service was deteriorating, the criminals weren't as smart as they used to be.

It was the cynical, callous Nineteen Twenties, we are told, that brought on the Wicked Thirties and the Tragic Forties. Yet it seems to me that the Twenties came right out of the Tens, and the Tens out of the Eighteen Nineties, and so forth. Hindsight is easy, and I am as subject to it as any. I claim no special gifts for prophecy; it was just that I saw a few more things that gave grounds for uneasiness. Most people I know, at least over

here, enjoyed themselves thoroughly in the Twenties. But I happened several times to visit certain misery centers abroad, and because I felt miserable about them and spoke solemnly about them, and the need of doing something, I know I was looked upon by some as that ridiculous thing—a professional do-gooder. Oh, yes, I was the funny humanitarian type—just made for caricature and burlesque.

I have made some twenty-five trips to Europe, and in most of them I enjoyed myself as much as anyone. If one went to France or England in the Twenties, one found little to complain about. Italy, seen only with a tourist's eye, was as delightful as ever, for all of Mussolini and his Fascists. In the poverty-stricken Vienna one could ignore the malnutrition of others and concentrate on their *Gemütlichkeit*; the nice Viennese were too polite to correct your vision; if *Gemütlichkeit* was what you insisted on, they would gladly let you have it. An American visitor could have a most flattering time in Vienna. And in Germany, too, if one looked only at surfaces. But further East it was not so easy to deceive one's self. If one visited Poland or Rumania one could see things plainly that led to doubts; things that were not hidden.

I made such a trip to Poland in 1926. Although the general condition of Poland had been reported as good, large parts of the Jewish population there

were destitute, and a fund was being raised for them by their co-religionists in America. What was going on there was described as a "cold pogrom" which people didn't mention. Jews were being boycotted in various ways, were given no employment in the extensive public works of the new republic, and were kept out of the large and expanding civil service.

It was quite a lesson in the story of liberty. The Poles, who had been fighting for liberty for a couple of centuries, and whose resistance to various oppressors had inspired people everywhere, seemed to be desiring not merely liberty for themselves but also the liberty to oppress others. Their leader, Pilsudski, was an old Socialist who had had a very honorable career fighting in the ranks of the under-privileged in Europe. He was one whom people had counted upon to lead the Poles in the path of democracy. But soon after he achieved power he suppressed parliamentary parties, established a dictatorship, put on the military tunic dictators love so much, and got rid of all vestiges of democracy. The old Socialist quickly forgot his beloved proletariat and became a military fire-eater who surrounded himself with strutting saber-rattlers.

Poland under Pilsudski was constantly spoiling for a fight and the acquisition of the lands of others—it threatened Lithuania, it threatened the weak Weimar Republic, and would have threatened

Czechoslovakia too if the Czechoslovaks hadn't seemed so strong and ready to fight. Earlier, in 1920, it had gotten into a war with Red Russia, then torn by civil war of its own, and had to be rescued from disaster by General Weygand and the French General Staff. So much for liberty.

Pilsudski in 1926 was something of a model for Hitler in 1933. Socialism, whatever its idealistic programs and its actual deeds, has this to be said about it, too—it has also served as a school for tyrants. Mussolini, Pilsudski, Stalin—three military tunic dictators—had similar Socialist beginnings. Mussolini turned against Socialism and went reactionary before he got into power, and Pilsudski and Stalin turned against Socialism and went reactionary while they were in power—that is the main difference between them.

American diplomats in Warsaw, however, thought Pilsudski a very fine fellow because he had a hunting lodge to which he used to invite them and where he played the part of a lavish host. For some diplomats there's nothing like a dictator's hunting lodge to take the curse off a dictatorship.

To hear some Poles talk, the country was in its most glorious epoch. On a train between Vienna and Warsaw I talked to a Pole about the economic depression in Poland. “Depression? Which depression?” he said. “Everything is fine in Poland. The nation is doing much building, many great things. There is plenty of work and many excellent busi-

ness opportunities. It is a custom among us to say business is bad, but don't take it too seriously. It is good."

In Warsaw I mentioned this conversation to members of the Jewish community, who were telling me about Jewish destitution. "Yes, it is fine, for them," said one man, "but not for us. We are kept out of everything."

Later he said, "I was a Polish patriot. I belonged to a secret group which worked against the Russian masters. When Poland gained its independence I was full of joy. 'Now,' I said, 'I can be a true Pole in the sunlight and hold up my head with pride, do my share in making this a great republic.' But I soon learned I was not wanted as a Pole."

I visited Brest-Litovsk, a city which had changed hands frequently during the fighting in the late war and had been heavily bombarded by both the Germans and the Russians. A good many people were still living in the cellars of ruined houses, packed eight and ten into a room.

At Pinsk I visited the mass grave of some fifty Jewish victims of a pogrom several years earlier. The youth who accompanied me said the Jewish population had to live constantly with the thought of such things recurring.

"It can happen any time," he said. "Two or three roughs drink heavily and get themselves drunk, and then they will get a lust for going into the Jewish quarter and trying to beat up people. If

the Jews defend themselves they are the aggressors, of course, and all the roughs pour in to the quarter, and there is a pogrom."

He was a strong, stalwart youth, who looked more like a hardy peasant than an intellectual. "I can take care of myself very well in a fight, and personally I am not afraid of any of them," he said. "But I have to be careful. If a drunken lout comes into my street and hits people it is the easiest thing in the world for me to dispose of him. But I have to think of what might happen. If I hit one of them, a whole gang of them will come in. These brave ones will not be looking just for me. They will murder women and children. There is only one answer for that. Every Jew must be armed and must be ready to use his arms. This is the only thing the others will respect.

"But I can't get other Jews to carry arms and use them. They think I am a rough, too, and that I will only get them into trouble. There will be trouble anyway, and I say it is better to die killing pogromists than to die without a fight. If a few pogromists get killed each time they try it, there may be less enthusiasm for pogroms."

I learned later that quite a few Jewish villages in Poland had organized defense corps, and that these villages were not molested very often.

I remember an interesting visit to a Jewish village called Domaszew, not far from Brest-Litovsk. It was a poverty-stricken place inhabited

by small farmers who had received aid from the Joint Distribution Committee to help them in making a go of things. Nearly all of them were former city dwellers. As farmers they were not very experienced and were having a hard life, but they were glad to be where they were, outside of a so-called ghetto quarter.

Yet they were living in the very scene of an earlier pogrom. In 1919 a bandit rabble had swept through there—Petlurists, I think. They rounded up all the men in the village—about one hundred and fifty of them—and shot them all down in the little square. The present villagers preferred not to talk about this. They had smiling, cheerful faces as they talked about their onion and potato crops, and the possibility of repaying part of the loans that had been made to them.

At a wicket fence along the main road I stopped for a talk with an old man. It turned out he was one of the former villagers. That fateful day of the pogrom he had felt restless and had left the village, and so had escaped the slaughter. He was not very popular with the new villagers, because his talk went frequently back to that day, and the new villagers didn't like to hear it.

"It's very quiet here," I said to him.

"Too quiet," he replied. "Whenever it gets quiet like this I become restless, I think something must happen. It was a very quiet day in 1919 when . . ."

And he told me the story of the pogrom. I did my best to reassure him, and then lamely I spoke of what lovely country it was. "The air here is very fine," I said.

He sniffed. "Pogrom weather," he said.

I left him and joined other villagers further down. They were gathered around a boy with a violin. He was playing merry dance tunes and they were all jogging and singing. Two farmers came and escorted me to a meeting which the village council had decided to hold in honor of a visitor from America. At the meeting they told me all their problems of work and life. Their chief spokesman had been chosen to explain things to me because he had once been in Berlin and they were proud of the way he spoke German. I made notes on everything he said. When I had finished the chairman asked me to please let him have the notes. I handed them over, and the chairman took out a big rubber stamp and stamped them in several places. When I asked him why he did that, he replied that nothing was official without a rubber stamp, and the stamp would be an assurance to the American people that my notes were genuine, and were approved by the Council of Domaszew.

I do not know what happened to the people of Domaszew during the Hitler era. Poland was the German slaughterhouse for the Jewish people. And many Poles, even though frightfully oppressed by the Nazis, fell in readily with the anti-

Semitism of their oppressors. One proof of this was that when the Nazis were defeated and driven out of Poland, the remaining Jews—those who had escaped the Nazi gas chambers—were again subjected to pogroms by the Poles. They had to stream out of Poland and seek the shelter of the camps in the American zone of Germany—a bitter experience to be going back to Hitlerland and to be again in camps.

During that 1926 trip I also visited parts of Rumania, and got ample evidence of how Jews were being terrorized by gangs of hoodlums in the Rumanian-acquired territories of Bukovina, Transylvania and Bessarabia. In two wars the fierce-looking Rumanian soldiery, whenever met by an organized military foe, have rarely distinguished themselves for bravery. But in mobs against defenseless minorities Rumanian youths were very brave indeed. Ten of them could, with the greatest courage, attack an old man.

All of this type of experience in the midst of the later holocaust of 1939-1945 determined so many of the Jewish survivors that they wanted no more of Europe, and it made them turn their eyes and their feet toward Palestine as the only possible land and haven.

Anti-Semitism exists on many levels, and it is impossible to make one generalization to cover it all. However, the Jews who faced the pogroms and mass slaughter in Eastern Europe were forced to

make one simple generalization: "Nobody hates the murderer. Everybody hates the victim." A simple but terrifying thought.

I am against terrorism by anyone, whoever the person, whatever the cause. I have opposed the acts of the Jewish terrorists in Palestine, and had a bitter argument about it one day with a militant Zionist who came to visit me. When I said it was shameful and unpardonable my visitor said calmly that although I might have been concerned with anti-Semitism all my life I had never really been touched by it.

"These terrorists," he said, "are mainly youths whose mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers in Europe have been killed by mobs or shoveled into ovens. They are not as philosophical about it as some people would like them to be. From these facts they have acquired a very blunt theory of anti-Semitism. They hold that anti-Semitism appeals to the bully in people, to the bully in even the most timorous ones. Anti-Semites, like others, fear ever so many things, but the fact that they don't fear the Jew, that he is weak and helpless, works on them like adrenalin on a dog. It brings out all their courage for aggression. It isn't because anti-Semites have heard nasty things about Jews that they want to destroy them. These nasty things are the fantasies they themselves create in order to give themselves moral support for attacking the defenseless. Martyrdom is very noble and inspiring

in the story books. But in real life nobody likes a martyr; everybody wants to give the corpse an extra kick for good measure.

“Those Jewish terrorists learned bitter lessons in 1938 and 1939—and they learned them from England. The lessons were that human rights and moral decency are not enough. 1938 was Munich. Czechoslovakia represented rights and decency, but the English were more impressed by Hitler’s bluster and threats, and so they gave part of Czechoslovakia to Hitler and told the Czechs not to bore anybody with their tiresome complaints about justice; as the record shows, Chamberlain yawned right in the faces of the Czech delegation. And 1939—1939 was the White Paper in Palestine. The Arabs were blustering, too, like Hitler; and so the British promptly responded with a White Paper that penalized the Jews. This was a lesson that was not forgotten. And there were further lessons. When the war came the Palestinian Jews enlisted in great numbers in the British army; the Arabs did not. So, when the war was over the British, full of gratitude to the supporters of democracy, were anxious to reward—the Arabs! That is why Britain, in addition to being the mother of parliaments, is the mother of terrorism. The Palestine terrorists are few in numbers, but they are all imbued with the same idea; they want to win the respect of England in the only way that such respect can be had from England.”

I said this was a very cynical view and was no justification for terrorism—there could be none. One aggression brings another, and there is no final justice in the gun. My visitor smiled grimly.

"The Jews in Palestine," he said, "have done a miraculous job in reclaiming the desert, wiping out disease, establishing the finest schools, hospitals, social conditions, equity in labor. But this hasn't impressed some people very much. What has really impressed these people is that the Israeli are handy with guns, grenades and bayonets. Our soldiers have won more esteem for us than our great thinkers have won. It is a bitter reflection, but it is true."

III

DYING OF COMMITTEES

AS I look back at almost any part of my adult life, I can see committees, committees, committees . . . an endless chain of them. I grew up in a time when women were beginning to ask for equal rights, for full participation in the life of the community. It was a movement with which I was thoroughly in accord. I had the example of my mother, who as a young woman in Hungary had done something practically revolutionary. She had become a school teacher—a job previously the monopoly of men. She was the first Jewess to become a school teacher in Hungary, and for this she was frowned upon and ostracized by various shocked members of her community. Her example inspired me, led me as a young girl to seek out all kinds of less sheltered activities, into which I entered with all the ardor of a cause, and I know I felt very brave and heroine-like to myself.

In San Francisco, while still a high school girl, I worked in the slums for the Fruit and Flower Mission, and later served in one of the first American kindergartens, conducted by Kate Douglas Wiggin (later famous as the author of *Rebecca of*

Sunnybrook Farm) and her step-sister, Nora Smith. This work gave me a taste for social service which I never lost. As I grew older I participated more and more, and soon I was that familiar American phenomenon—the committeewoman.

In New York, shortly after my marriage, I entered into the work of the Women's Health Protective Association, which was campaigning for better city sanitation. We held many indignation meetings about the conditions of garbage disposal, and as a speaker at these meetings I did so well with public indignation that I was soon invited by other public bodies to be equally indignant with their causes.

The Congress of Mothers in Washington, organized by Mrs. Phoebe Hearst and presided over by Mrs. Grover Cleveland, enlisted me as a speaker representing Jewish women. In later years, I joined Mrs. Josephine Shaw Lowell, inspirer of the Women's Municipal League, and Grace Dodge, president of the Young Women's Christian Association, in a successful campaign to elect Seth Low, the Fusion Candidate, as Mayor of New York.

But public speaking was only a small part of welfare activities. I did work in the tenement districts for the Emanu-El Sisterhood, and later, when the Council of Jewish Women was formed, I became president of its New York section.

Employment work had interested me from early

days in San Francisco, and as time went on it became ever more important for me. I had a veritable passion for finding work for people, liked nothing better than tracking down a job for someone who needed one—it was a triumph. When the Young Women's Hebrew Association put up its new building in New York I took charge of organizing its employment bureau. Soon this bureau was busier than had been anticipated, for a depression was on. The First World War had broken out and at first the United States was economically hard hit. The New York Stock Exchange was closed. The export and import trades dwindled, and there was widespread unemployment. At the new bureau we worked unceasingly to find new places for young women, and with some success. These conditions were prevalent throughout the country, and the Wilson Administration tried to alleviate matters through the forming of a Federal Unemployment Committee which would attack the problem nationally. Because of my own experiences in that field, I was chosen to serve on this committee, which did very good work.

Up to that time unemployment had never been considered a governmental concern. If people lacked work and starved it was purely a private affair. In those days the legend still prevailed that there was always a job for anyone who really wanted to work, and if anyone happened to be unemployed he was naturally a lazy unmentionable

with a guilty conscience and a necessarily apologetic air.

I noticed very early in life that unhappy metamorphosis by which people who are unemployed, for whatever reason, soon get the hangdog look, and it has always been part of my credo to restore the self-confidence and morale of unemployed persons and to bother as many persons as possible in their behalf.

As many have no doubt noticed, one committee usually leads to another, and not only are the invitations hard to resist—often one doesn't want to resist.

All those committees! The National League for Women's Service, of which I was industrial chairman. The American Jewish Relief Committee and Joint Distribution Committee, for which I raised funds. The United War Work Campaign, in which I represented the Jewish women of the country on a committee along with Mrs. Henry P. Davison representing the Protestants and Mrs. Nicholas Brady representing the Catholics. The Federal Employment Committee, for which I, as a dollar-a-year woman during the First World War, helped organize the United States Employment Clearance Service—the first agency of its kind. The Reconstruction Committee of the Council of Jewish Women, for which I traveled overseas after the war and organized welfare activities for stranded refugees. The World Con-

gress of Jewish Women in Vienna, of which I was president. The New York State Employment Committee, to which I was appointed by Franklin D. Roosevelt as Governor. I was the only woman on that committee, which had a male representation of sixteen. We used to go up to Albany for a meeting with the Governor once a week, and his invariable greeting was, "Good morning, sixteen gentlemen and one lady." For that committee I wrote a minority report which, later, after much discussion, was adopted as the majority report.

One night I had a terrible dream in which I felt I was dying of too many committees. In the dream there was an angel of life and an angel of death. The angel of death said, "Please join our excellent committee." But the angel of life said, "Resign!" and he prevailed. In the morning I resigned from about a dozen committees, and in the afternoon I resigned from six more.

But it was no use. I received ever so many calls and letters from sister officers and members, asking me to explain what was wrong with the committee, why was I resigning, and what did it mean? I had to make many reassuring explanations that no harm or criticism was intended, that the committees were perfectly all right.

It was really difficult to resign. I never in my life had had so much explaining and defending of myself to do. So I decided my revolt against com-

mittee-itis was causing me more pain and trouble than the malady.

One committee I always held fast to, however, was the Council of Jewish Women. It was my first love, and to it I have always been faithful. One of my fondest memories is a banquet which was given in my honor at the Hotel Commodore on the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Council. There were nine hundred guests, and among them some of the most distinguished people in American life. At this dinner I was presented with a check for fifty thousand dollars which I was free to apply to any good works I chose. In presenting the check the dinner chairman, Felix M. Warburg, said, "Now, mind, this is not for a mink coat."

One "mink coat" was the Council, to which I gave a check for ten thousand dollars the next day, and the other "coats" were accounted for by gifts to other organizations.

It is easy for the committee to be overdone. It is also a very easy thing to laugh at, and when I see those Helen Hokinson cartoons of committee-women in the *New Yorker*, I laugh too, as much as anyone. But the passion of women for serving on committees is a very understandable and laudable thing.

It was not so long ago that such activities were the exclusive prerogative of the male, and women are still intoxicated—and rightly so—with so-called equality, and take full advantage of it. And

I am sure that when you compare their meetings to those of men, you will find that the ratio of nonsense to good sense in the course of an hour or two is not any higher.

One thing about a democracy is that we often forget to appreciate the freedoms we have. We even very foolishly laugh at them, and we spend more time criticizing the foibles of our liberties than in guarding ourselves against the possible loss of them. One example is that of our innumerable committees for good works. The fact that people can form and busy themselves with committees is, for some critics, a subject for mockery. They would hold that those who remain aloof and do nothing whatever for others are, somehow, superior and wiser people. If they do join a committee, they take pleasure in the attitude that it is all very boring and that they don't really bother about it. They are, however, just the short-sighted ones who don't realize that a liberty, when scoffed at, can be lost.

Actually, the public committee is a thing that must not only be treasured, but must be guarded. The committee is not at all a ridiculous thing. In Russia Stalin himself was the first one to perceive this—Stalin, the eternal committeeman. He came to power in Russia, not by any exertion of violence, but through the quiet capture of one committee after another, and the packing of them with his own creatures. That was the thing that his rival

Trotsky never realized until it was too late, when he found himself confronted by a solid phalanx of Stalin committeemen, voting Trotsky out of the Communist heaven, with motions, amendments, and resolutions.

The first Russian revolution was a general uprising by all classes and parties against the Czar. The second, or Bolshevik revolution was a *coup d'état* by Lenin-led soldier peasants heeding the slogans of "end the war" and "divide the land." But the third revolution, the Stalin assumption of power, was strictly a committee revolution.

Since the hero usually sets the pattern for his followers, a large part of Communist tactics everywhere for the past twenty years has been devoted to the capture of committees. Any public committee nowadays has to be on its guard against the entrance of all the little Stalins and Stalinesses seeking deviously to gain control for the big committeeman in Moscow.

Let us, therefore, appreciate our various committees, and let us guard and preserve them for the good democratic things they are.

IV

AN ASSORTMENT OF LEGACIES

I HAVE always been inheriting things, and my life, as I see it, has been full of wonderful legacies—spiritual and material. From my father I inherited two things—the sense of personal and family dignity, and the desire for the understanding and amity of those outside the family, the tribe, the religion, the nation. My father was anything but narrowly sectarian. Passionately devoted to his creed, he saw and paid tribute to the good in other creeds; and in his life in America he reached out toward many Christian clergymen and made them his friends.

A rabbi's home sees almost as much traffic as a railway station, with people always coming and going; the home of Rabbi Bettelheim, whether in Richmond, San Francisco or Baltimore, had almost as many Christian visitors as Jewish. Some members of his various congregations used to wonder about this; for their taste he was a little too liberal and all-embracing in his friendships.

To the annual Passover Seder festivities in our home he used to invite about forty or fifty guests, a good many of whom were Christians. I remem-

ber once, as a young girl, asking him why he invited so many Christians to a family festival.

"To let people see that we have no secrets," he replied. "You can be made to believe fantastic things about people when you do not know them. But when you know, you cannot be misled. So many lies are manufactured about us—especially in regard to Passover—and they gain credence among the unthinking and the ignorant. But those who know us will see that these are lies. Throw open the doors and let people view us as we are. In this way we dissolve antipathies and make friendships, and when efforts are made to defame us, we will have friends who will champion the truth."

The Passover blood libels, that recurrent fiction from the Dark Ages, has been one of the blots on the history of human relations—a fantastic thing to be persisting into so-called civilized eras. We have learned, however, that civilization is a rather loose term, considering that we have seen, in the midst of ages of enlightenment, as much primitive barbarism as ever was unleashed in the ancient world. My father used to discuss these blood libels with Christian clergymen—particularly, in the Richmond days, with Bishop Gibbons. These two men exchanged reflections about the burdens they carried of libels directed against their creeds. Bishop Gibbons talked of the malicious stories in circulation that the Pope intended to come to Washington and set up his headquarters in the

White House; and that every Catholic home and club was an arsenal. My father talked of the blood libels and of the scurrilous pamphlets about international Jews.

They used to continue these discussions by correspondence after both left Richmond, my father to minister to a new congregation in San Francisco, Bishop Gibbons to become Cardinal in Baltimore (a city to which my father moved later for a new rabbinate). Each year at Passover, my father used to send a package of *matzoth* (unleavened Passover bread) to Cardinal Gibbons. Along with the *matzoth* went a note assuring the Cardinal that no Christian blood had gone into their making. It was always the same kind of note, and the Cardinal always sent the same acknowledgement: that he had eaten the *matzoth*, found them extremely good, and wished Passover came more often. The Cardinal and the Rabbi used to joke a good deal about this yearly exchange when they came together again in Baltimore.

My father's attitude toward people outside the creed is also my attitude—it is something I am very glad to have inherited. In discussions of anti-Semitism the phrase, "some of my best friends are Jews" is usually supposed to carry anti-Semitic connotations, as if stamping the utterer as really an anti-Semite. On the reverse side, when I say, "Some of my best friends are Christians," it doesn't

mean that I am really anti-Christian; it means just what it says, without reservations.

From my husband I inherited his children—the greatest legacy of all. From my son, George, I inherited his passion to help Jewish scholarship, and his interest in the two great manifestations of it—the Kohut Foundation and the Kohut Memorial Library.

These are things of the spirit—but there have been material inheritances too, and from many sources and many people. For example, Fidelia Jewett. She was one of my teachers in San Francisco, and her love and kindly feeling toward people in general were an inspiration to me in formative years. I thought at the time that I had gained quite a good deal from her spirit and would always be in her debt. It was surely enough of an inheritance. What was my surprise, however, years later, when I was already a married woman in New York, to receive a letter from an attorney in San Francisco informing me that Fidelia Jewett had died and had left me twenty-five hundred dollars in her will.

And in later years there was Mrs. Jacob H. Schiff—ever a kind and thoughtful friend. Her friendship alone was enough of an inheritance. When the depression came after the financial crash of 1929, Mrs. Schiff was concerned over whether I might have been affected by it. She asked Felix Warburg to approach me and find out. Mr. War-

burg told me that if I had been hit by the crash I was not to worry. Mrs. Schiff, he said, had set aside \$20,000 for me in the will she had drawn up, and if I were in financial straits I could have the amount right away. I was deeply touched by this, and fortunately I was not in need. Years later, after Mrs. Schiff passed away, I received the legacy.

Another inheritance, from George, was the Columbia Grammar School. I was seventy at the time, but the old schoolmarm spirit was still strong in me, and so for several years I administered this boys' private school to the best of my ability, until illness forced me to relinquish it into other hands.

In these last years I have become very Yale-conscious. Yale is not co-ed and my own school is the University of California, but I am as Yale-minded as any old grad, and lately I even follow its football games. I am certainly more sentimental about Yale than about my own alma mater. That is because I have inherited love of Yale from George. It was not his school either, but it was his choice for the Kohut Library and scholarships. He made so many fine friends there, and I inherited these friends, too.

George first became interested in Yale as a youth. He had noticed that the seal of the college was in Hebrew, and in looking into this he became interested and fascinated by the personality of Ezra Stiles, who was President of Yale College from 1777 to 1795. He studied all of Dr. Stiles' writings

and voluminous diaries, and all contemporary accounts of him, and finally he wrote a scholarly book about the Yale educator.

Dr. Stiles was a great Hebraist. Originally a clergyman from Newport, Rhode Island, he was at first rather narrow and intolerant in his religious attitudes, but when he began studying Hebrew he became passionately interested in the Jews, sought them out, cultivated their friendship, and tried to learn all he could from and about them. He began the study of Hebrew at the age of forty. The cantor of the Newport Synagogue, Reverend Isaac Touro, gave him the Hebrew alphabet, and Dr. Stiles immediately went to work putting words and sentences together and translating various books of the Bible back into Hebrew. He visited the Newport Synagogue almost every day, was frequently present at holiday services, and became the warm friend of the resident Rabbi Hayyim Isaac Carigal, a native of Hebron, Palestine, who was much traveled and fluent in many tongues. Rabbi Carigal was master of Chaldean, Syriac and Rabbinical Hebrew, all of which Dr. Stiles imbibed.

Ezra Stiles' avocation was an effort to trace the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel. He corresponded on this subject with people in distant parts of the world. Whenever he met travelers, seafaring men, traders from other regions, he asked them many questions about Jews they had seen in their voyages, and requested descriptions of them, of their

manner of life and their mode of religious services. All the information he acquired was recorded in the diaries he kept over the years, which eventually filled thirty volumes.

Dr. Stiles was an early American Zionist who had no doubt of the re-establishment of the Twelve Tribes of Palestine. He prophesied that the new Jewish Palestine would become a reality in the year 2370, and he said that the geographical point marking the return would be somewhere twenty miles north of Jerusalem.

When he became President of Yale, he also taught a class in Semitics there, and he made Hebrew an obligatory course. His sons, his second wife and his daughter all studied Hebrew. It was Dr. Stiles who devised the Hebrew seal for Yale College. His contemporary, Reverend Samuel Locke, President of Harvard College, was also an Hebraist and made Commencement orations at Harvard in the Chaldee speech. Dr. Stiles' high praise for Dr. Locke was to laud him as an "Hebrician."

It was the early Hebraist aspect of Yale that inspired George's first interest in the great institution. And then, around 1912, at a meeting of the Oriental Society in Philadelphia, he met a great contemporary Yale Assyriologist, Professor Albert T. Clay. The two men were immediately drawn to each other by bonds of scholarship and friendship. It was through Dr. Clay's influence that the

Kohut Foundation, as well as the Kohut Memorial Collection, was established at Yale University.

Dr. Clay was forever dreaming of the East, writing of it, exploring it; his hope was to discover the Ur of the Chaldees, locate the biblical home of Abraham. His works, published in the Yale Oriental Series, contributed mightily to our knowledge of biblical countries.

Through Dr. Clay, George met another great Yale Orientalist, Professor Charles C. Torrey—and he, too, became just as warm and delightful a friend; and both of them became friends of mine. Dr. Clay died in 1925. In these last years since George's death in 1933, the friendship of Dr. Torrey has meant so much. Every year on the anniversary of George's death (while I was still able to get about), Dr. Torrey would come down from New Haven and we would go together to George's grave in Linden Hills Cemetery. There, Dr. Torrey recited the traditional Kaddish prayer in Hebrew. Since my illness he visits me frequently, and every week he writes me a fine letter which I call my Sabbath letter; if it comes on Wednesday or Thursday, I do not open it until Friday evening.

Dr. Torrey, the Foundation, the Library—they are all part of my Yale inheritance via George. And there are ever so many more inheritances from many sources that have blessed my life, and I wish I could mention them all here.

V

THREE ZIONIST SAINTS

I HAVE to depend upon radio for much knowledge of what goes on in the world. A year ago the radio thrilled me with the news that Israel had been acknowledged as a nation. But each subsequent day, as great empires juggled the Palestine situation to suit their own selfish ends, brought uncertainty after uncertainty. It became obvious that if Israel's future were to be left to the politics of other nations, Israel would have no future. The people of Israel understood this quite thoroughly, and so they took the matter of their destiny into their own hands, and fought for their nation on the battlefield. Of course, they really had many opponents, not just one. They defeated the invading Egyptians, Iraqi, Syrians and other British-inspired invaders without much difficulty, but at the same time they had to contend with the efforts of the British in the United Nations to deprive them of their victories. In all their long history of diplomacy, I do not think the British ever stooped so low as they did in the Palestine affair. Perhaps they did, but at least they managed to keep their machinations a secret, more or less.

Fortunately, it is no secret this time, and I think the world is well aware of every detail of British deviousness and double-dealing, and is quite nauseated by it. With a record like this, it becomes increasingly difficult for Britain to pose as the friend of democracies. In fact, when a democracy becomes the object of friendly overtures from Britain, it is time for that democracy to begin worrying.

A day or two after Israel had established its nationhood, a friend sent me a small flag—the flag with the blue stripes and the Star of David in the center. It is here in my room, always in view of my bed. It is the last thing I see at night, and the first thing I see in the morning. I pray that God will help maintain the long-wandering tribe in its homeland, where our people can live not only as Jews, but as members of a nation that wants them and needs them.

I am an American. But this does not preclude my belief and faith that Palestine belongs to the tribe of Israel, and that each of us has a real responsibility given us by our Almighty Father to help rebuild and give our people a homeland.

My interest in Zionism goes back to the Eighteen Nineties. George, while studying in Europe, had been taken very ill, and I had brought him for convalescence to an inn at Reichenau, a beautiful health resort near Vienna. To the inn one Friday

evening there came a man whose appearance startled me, he suggested in so many physical aspects my late husband. He was tall, with very white skin, large blue eyes, and with a square-cut blue-black beard that made him look like the storied images of Assyrian kings. Several minutes later I was introduced to him. He was Dr. Theodor Herzl, the founder of modern Zionism.

Dr. Herzl's creation of the Zionist movement was recent history, but the man was already a legend. Of Jewish origin, he had previously not been very conscious of Judaism. He had been, rather, a true cosmopolite—a brilliant journalist, playwright, critic, one of the chief ornaments of the press of Vienna. But the Dreyfus Case, and parallel outbreaks of anti-Semitism in other countries changed him. It was while reporting the Dreyfus Case for the *Neue Freie Presse* of Vienna that Dr. Herzl became a transformed and consecrated being. Through him there coursed urgently the plea of his people to return to their ancient homeland and build life anew, free of the hatreds which surrounded them in their current milieu.

He wrote a book, *The Jewish State*, which kindled many imaginations, and then he set about to make his dream a reality. The artist, the dilettante, the journalist with the charming, witty pen became the man with a flame, a prophet who looked the part, an envoy extraordinary who visited and pleaded with all the crowned heads of Europe in

pursuance of his cause. He suddenly acquired, too, the patience of the saint, and would plead for Zionism to a small group of humble workers with the same assiduity and vision as when he laid the case of the Jews for Zionism before the Kaiser, the Sultan of Turkey, the King of England, and various Prime Ministers and Presidents.

Although he captured the imagination of all, he had no literal success in obtaining permission for the Jews to resettle the Palestine wastes; the one success he did have was that the Zionist organization came into being and the long work of bringing the dream to reality was begun.

He had come to Reichenau to visit his parents, who were staying there for the summer; he came every week end. It was a privilege to know such a man, and I had many talks with him. I must confess that I was at first not at all receptive to the idea of a Jewish state. There was then in currency a famous witticism, to wit: "I am all in favor of a Zionist state, providing I can be the permanent Zionist Ambassador to Paris." I had something of the same sentiment, although not for the same post. America, any part of it, was the dream of which I was enamoured; and the dream was so fulfilled in my case, that I was not too sympathetic toward other dreams, and was virtually chauvinistic in my American attitude toward other places (even though I was away from America, or should I say because of it).

I am afraid I was not too tactful at this first meeting with the prophet. I told him that my husband's grandfather had gone to Jerusalem for the last of his days, and that my husband had dreamed of dying in Palestine, but that as for myself I was in a different category. "Speaking for myself," I said, "I should like to visit Palestine, but I should want to be assured of a round-trip ticket."

He had no doubt often heard such bright, smug remarks; he took it very quietly and tolerantly, with a bow of sad acknowledgment. In his journalistic days he had been noted for his biting, devastating wit; he could have annihilated me with a couple of words. But the journalist in him had given way to the prophet, and the faculty of sharp repartee was no longer necessary or desirable to him. Besides, there was no need for devastating me. No sooner had the words passed my lips than I felt utterly destroyed by them. But Dr. Herzl, speaking as if nothing out of the ordinary had happened, began to tell me of Zionism.

As he spoke, I reflected that I was the daughter of a great rabbi, and the widow of another; and that for one with such a background, I had spoken exceeding small. I deserved a lesson as if I were an unthinking child; and the words of Dr. Herzl, spoken with softness, dignity and patience, were transformed as he spoke, without his knowledge, into something entirely different—a simultaneous lecture by both my father and my husband from

the shadows, urging upon me humility, understanding, respect.

It was a lesson I never forgot.

The stay at Reichenau lasted thirteen weeks, and each week end Dr. Herzl arrived and I imbibed more and more of the spirit of his mission, and I have been a confirmed Zionist ever since. We became very good friends with him and his family. I was obliged suddenly to return to America before George's period of convalescence was over, and Dr. Herzl's mother told me not to worry, as she would look after George until he was fully recovered. And she did.

I have since participated fully in the Zionist movement, not as a leader, but as a follower, and am especially proud of my personal links with the leaders of the movement.

Henrietta Szold, for example. She, too, was like myself the daughter of a Hungarian-American rabbi. Dr. Benjamin Szold was my father's classmate at the theological seminary, and his lifelong friend. He preceded my father to America and became the rabbi of a congregation in Baltimore. When my father left Hungary for the United States, Dr. Szold came especially from Baltimore to the port of New York to greet him and take him home with him. My father stayed with Dr. Szold until he was invited to a congregation in Philadelphia.

Years later my father got a congregation in

Baltimore, too, and the two friends and cronies were united for the rest of my father's life. I came to Baltimore in advance of the family to get their new home ready, and to prepare for my own marriage, and during that interim I lived with the Szolds in their house on Lombard Street. It was then that I really got to know the Szold girls, Henrietta and Rachel, and their wonderful mother, and their saint-like father, of whom Cardinal Gibbons once said during a conference of Baltimore ministers of all sects, "Here is the best Christian in the room."

Alexander Kohut and I were married in the new Bettelheim home on McCullough Street. Dr. Szold officiated, and Henrietta played Mendelssohn's *Wedding March*. We left for New York and our new life there. A few years later Henrietta, too, came to New York and began her glorious career for her people.

When Dr. Herzl launched the Zionist movement, she was in the very forefront of its advocates. She created Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization; she was both a philosopher of Zionism and a principal worker for it; and she soon became one of the most renowned women in contemporary Jewish life—a figure fit to rank with the great women of Biblical history.

Having advocated Zionism from youth, she went to Palestine in the early Twenties and became the leader of all women's work there in the build-

ing of the new homeland. She was through with philosophy and theory; now it was all work, pioneer work, with no time or desire for the relaxations and amenities of the milieu in America in which she had once lived. One of her finest monuments in Palestine was the great Hadassah Hospital which she conceived and created. It was in that hospital that she died in 1944.

I had a letter from her from the Hadassah Hospital which arrived in New York only after the news of her death. In it she spoke of our days in Baltimore, of her yearning, after twenty years of absence, for a New England autumn, of the work that was being done in Palestine to help win the war, and of her need for getting back on the job. She spoke of my illness, and in speaking of it forgot to speak of her own; she, in the midst of her fatal illness and her vital concerns, was devoting the letter to cheering *me* up.

It is a matter of pride for me to have been her friend and associate. Hadassah, with its thousands of chapters and its many contributions to Judaism and Zionism, is her monument. Only last year I learned that one of its tiny chapters in a small community had been named for me. For me that is as good as the Nobel Prize.

Another great personal link with Zionism has been Rabbi Stephen S. Wise. When I mention that he, too, came of Hungarian rabbis, I know I am making myself sound as if all my pride must have

similar regional roots to be satisfactory to me, but it isn't so at all. The world doesn't begin and end with Hungarian-Americans, delightful as so many of them are. It just so happens that these were among my early and lasting associations.

Actually, it would have been surprising if there were no bond of common interest with Stephen Wise. He was the descendant of seven successive generations of Hungarian rabbis. So was I. Hungarian-born and brought to this country at an early age, he was quickly imbued with American ideals and gave to America his spirit and essence. When our families met in New York in the Eighties, we entered into an immediate bond of comradeship.

Stephen's father, Aaron Wise, was rabbi of the old Clinton Street Synagogue. Stephen, too, was destined for the rabbinate. When the Jewish Theological Seminary was founded in the early Eighteen-Nineties, Stephen studied in my husband's Talmudic course, as did my son George. The two young men had their last lesson in the Talmud from my husband just one day before his death. Feeble as Dr. Kohut was, he insisted on giving the lesson, and they came to his bedside. His hands were too weak to hold the book, and the young men held it for him as the dying rabbi expounded the wisdom of the Talmud for the last time.

Stephen and George were always like brothers—brothers who never quarreled. Each had great

enthusiasm for what the other was doing, and often they pooled their enthusiasms in joint work for the common good. There were periods when George would write to Stephen as often as five times a day, and Stephen was just as powerful a correspondent.

As Stephen reached manhood it soon became evident to many that here was a man unusually endowed. He was brilliant, dynamic, courageous, forthright. Physically he had been blessed with a most prepossessing appearance. He was tall, handsome, and with a voice as rich as a cello. Spiritually he was oriented toward the poor and unfortunate, and he quickly became their champion.

His second rabbinate was in the West, at Portland, Oregon. It was exciting to watch, even from afar, how he progressed and developed. In Portland he not only ministered inspiringly to his congregation, but became a communal leader and one of the city's chief prides. His fame spread, and in the East not a few important congregations wished they could have as their leader this Western rabbi who had been raised and trained in New York—this pupil of Alexander Kohut.

He went early into the Zionist movement, lent it all the power of his personality, and for many years was its leading figure in America. As a rabbi he was not concerned exclusively and literally with the members of his congregation. His ministry included concern for the welfare of the city and the nation, and so he was always on the

side of clean government, and forcefully fought political corruption as well as religious bigotry wherever he saw it. He was never afraid to speak out against injustice in tones reminiscent of the prophets. This often embarrassed the timorous safe, who felt that injustice should always be referred to very discreetly for fear of offending the unjust. But that was not Stephen Wise's way.

Just a few years after Stephen Wise's ministerial debut in Portland, he was invited to become rabbi of one of New York's most important congregations. There was just one drawback. The congregation's board of trustees was somewhat nervous about its rabbi being involved too much in public affairs and in causes it considered debatable, such as Zionism. It did not like controversy and it wished to have the final say over what its rabbi might interest himself in publicly. Rabbi Wise could not accept such control and he declined the invitation.

A few years later, in 1907, he came to New York and established his own synagogue, the Free Synagogue, which immediately rallied many congregants and supporters. He withheld his support from no good cause, and he spoke freely and fearlessly in his denunciations of the vicious and corrupt. Locally he campaigned against graft-ridden Tammany Hall; nationally he was a champion of Woodrow Wilson, the New Freedom and the League of Nations. His work in behalf of Zion-

ism and Palestine was unremitting; he was for many years President of the Zionist Organization of America and carried on its work unflinchingly at a time when it had few supporters; when, indeed, many influential American Jews frowned upon such activities as disturbing to their own comfortable position. But at no time did Rabbi Wise ever consider personal comfort or convenience.

He won a great following, and it became the practice of many New Yorkers, regardless of their creed, to flock to his sermons at the Free Synagogue—where they heard one of the greatest orators of his time preaching the most forceful sermons of his time, in a voice so rich that the echoes of it lingered long in the memory. Just as he gained popularity, so, naturally, he won unpopularity too. Professional politicians could not be expected to like a man who exposed the iniquities of machine politics. Bigots could not admire a man who threw a clear light upon the petty viciousness of their natures. Some fellow Jews were made uncomfortable by his “voice of conscience.” These squeamish co-religionists, when Rabbi Wise insisted on pointing out the troubles and persecutions Jews were undergoing in Europe, regarded Rabbi Wise as a troublemaker! Their idea was that nothing ought to be said about these things, and they would soon pass away. How fool-

ish and short-sighted they were has been proven by history.

During all these years I and my family watched Stephen Wise with pride. He and George were inseparable. George gave all his help to Stephen in the founding of the Jewish Institute of Religion and became one of its directors. He was also a member of the editorial board of *Opinion*, the magazine founded by the Institute. As part of the work of the Kohut Foundation, George enlisted great European scholars to come to America and give series of lectures at the Institute. The Institute also published works of scholarship for the Kohut Foundation.

After George's death Rabbi Wise became my other son, and I could not have loved him more if he were my own flesh and blood. As a continuation of George's work, Rabbi Wise had me appointed to George's directorship in the Institute of Religion and to the editorial board of *Opinion*, and later the Institute conferred upon me the honorary degree of Doctor of Hebrew Letters.

To the woman who was converted to Zionism by Herzl, it is an especial satisfaction that this cause was later served so greatly by her husband's pupil, her son's comrade, and her "other son."

Rabbi Wise was stricken in his last year by the death of his beloved life's mate, Louise Waterman Wise. She was a beautiful person and a great soul

in her own right, and her work in the field of child adoption is a noble monument to her spirit.

Now Rabbi Wise has left this world too. A light has gone out of my life, as out of the lives of so many others who cherished him.

VI

IMPERIALISMS CLEAN AND UNCLEAN

HISTORY repeats itself, but it doesn't necessarily repeat itself exactly. This thing of living a long time makes one see many things that seem on first glance to be recurrences, although later students, with all the facts grown cold, will state they were as different as night and day. I have unfortunately lived through several wars, and have noticed, for one thing, that there is always a bitter quarrel among the victors.

The victors are quarreling now, and at the close of the First World War it was the same thing, with England and France constantly maneuvering against each other for the power control of Europe. There were sagacious statesmen in both countries—oh, assuredly—and the net result of their sagacity, in their eagerness to keep each other down, was that they weakened themselves and allowed Germany to rise again to disastrous military might.

The English, by cooperating with France, could have stopped Hitler at any point up to 1936, but such a move would have been too much of a concession to France, so England instead invited the

blitz of London. In the course of these sagacious maneuvers, England paid court to both Germany and Italy, both of which later made war upon her. Today, as both America and Russia, in the course of their victors' quarrel, court the Germans, it is allowable to wonder whether they may not be restoring German might to their own detriment.

German industrialists, chemists, scientists, may play up to one side or the other, pretending adherence, in order to embroil and weaken their conquerors, but in the end it is the return of German military hegemony they are thinking of, and both America and Russia seem to be playing into their hands.

The Americans employ German death-dealing scientists. The Russians employ German death-dealing scientists. The British employ German death-dealing scientists. All three may be building up something which may eventually become a matter of the Germans once again having death-dealing scientists, dealing death to their former employers. Let not the former Allies be deceived by the current face of German subservience. It lasts only as long as is necessary, after which the other face appears very quickly.

There is so much confusion and cynicism that it is difficult to say where one thing begins and another ends. I am preoccupied now with what seems to me to be the rounding of a cycle—a cycle begun at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Two things had their beginning practically simultaneously then, and both in England. One was the expansion of British imperialism to distant areas, and the exploitation of many native populations—so-called “backward” populations—for British profit. The other was the industrial revolution in England, which dotted the country with factory chimneys and brought into being the issues of capital and labor.

About British imperialism I will use a word usually consecrated to the products of Hollywood—“glamour.” British imperialism was so glamorously successful—materially and, shall I say, spiritually—that it produced envy among the rulers and leaders of younger and growing nations, which wanted to do likewise. The possession and exploitation of so many backward areas far from home had created, at home, a group of the most glamorously attractive ladies and gentlemen bedecked in the finest raiment and the nicest morals.

Young, vigorous nations wanted to emulate Britain’s example and win some of this kind of distinction for themselves. One might say to these nations, “It is very immoral to grab off slices of foreign territory and exploit their inhabitants.” But the answer would be, “Look at the English. They have done it very well, and they are the most moral people in the world.” And so long as that example remained the most desirable one, imperi-

alistic emulation would grow and a clash between conflicting emulations become inevitable.

England was the pace-setter in this, and she also set the pace in the industrial revolution, in which she was fully half a century ahead of any other nation. As contemporary accounts have told us, nothing was ever so miserable as the factory systems and the exploitation of underpaid, over-driven workers in the early industrial England, and nothing produced greater profits.

Between the factories at home, and the colonies abroad, the English countryside blossomed out magnificently with the many new great homes of the beneficiaries of these activities, and life became idyllic. When one remarked on the beauty of the English countryside, the lovely fields, the neat hedges, the fine trees, the splendid homes—all so eloquent of contentment—one never mentioned the factory chimneys that made it so heavenly—or the coolies, English or foreign.

But envy abroad could not be stilled or abated, and the First World War, whatever the immediate incidents from which it purported to spring, was actually the clash of rival imperialisms seeking to gain or to hold the prizes of colonial enterprise. As for the Second World War, it had its inception under the cloud, the pressures, the excuses, the complications of Communism.

We think of Communism as a Russian product, and it is, currently, but we forget that Commu-

nism is an outcome of the industrial revolution in England. Karl Marx produced the theory of Communism which the Russians espouse, at least in words. But his theories were not inspired by the Russians, or written for them; he did not even think of Russia. The inspiration for his theories and manifestoes about capital and labor, the proletariat, etc., came not from Moscow, but from Manchester. A resident of England for the latter half of his life, the studies upon which he based his appeals to the new proletariat were his studies of the evils of the industrial system of England. *Das Kapital* was written at a table in the British Museum, with reports about factory conditions in Manchester as one of the chief bases of argument. In fact, one social historian, James Harvey Robinson, has classified Karl Marx not as a German-Jewish revolutionary (incidentally, an anti-Semitic one), but as a mid-Victorian writer on social subjects, since mid-Victorian England, of which he was a part, was the greatest ultimate influence on his life.

Industrial capitalism, begun in England, reached even higher development elsewhere. And industrial communism, with roots also in England, has become the chief stock in trade of a country Karl Marx never even considered. The present irony is that in nearly all of Britain's outlying colonies and possessions in Asia there are, currently,

armed insurrectionary movements against Britain by the traditionally "backward" natives, and these movements take the name of Communist. Thus we see the rounding of a cycle and the joint flowering of two separate enterprises begun in Britain at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The foreign coolies of British imperialism have adopted the slogans and movements born of the English industrial revolution.

However, I take no satisfaction in this, for this sort of revenge is one in which the avenger acts not in the cause of righteous justice, but only for his own ends. Communism, whatever its earlier claims may have been, is in fruition corrupt, and is actually more reactionary now than the system it wants to displace. The brotherhood of man has given way to the hierarchy of commissars, those who fought the police have become the police, and the Communists would unite the workers of the world by putting chains on all of them.

With power-hunger, hierarchies, bureaucracies, constant intrigue, whatever idealism Communism may have once claimed has long been converted into the completest cynicism. I can never see the name or photo of an adored Communist leader (except the main one) without wondering when said Communist idol will be denounced by the Communists as "a rat." It seems to be an inevitable

process in the Communist turnover of personnel. Something about the party, its inner pressures, its intrigues, perhaps even its cold self-punishments and its guilts, wears out whatever warm humanity a man may have had when he joined it. Often, by the time he is out of it, he has no humanity left, and instead of joining the humanitarians opposed to Communism, he joins some other reactionary faction just as heartless as the Communists.

I wondered about Tito as to how long he would remain a Communist idol, and I have wondered about others. Back in 1925, while on a visit to Paris, a journalistic friend took me on a visit to the Chamber of Deputies. A Communist leader was making a speech. My friend said the man's name was Jacques Doriot, a popular Red deputy. Later he was the secretary of the Communist Party in France. "The Communists adore him," said my friend. "He is the apple of their eye." A few years later, when he had achieved too much personal popularity to suit Moscow, they began disciplining him and then they ousted him. He became a cold, brutal Rightist, a virulent Fascist. I cannot help but feel that his virulence, his hatred of man, was not at all a going to another extreme, but was rather the direct legacy of his development inside the intrigues of the party. He was a cynic fighting Communism with a bitter cynicism born of Communism. That is not true, however,

of all ex-Communist leaders. I think, for example, of Lovestone, who has done excellent democratic work since he broke with the Communist leadership in America.

VII

"THEIR OTHER MOTHER"

AS A matriarch who never had any children of her own, I have often been an object of curiosity to various people. They have wondered, and asked, about all kinds of things—particularly whether I underwent special stresses and strains which did not apply in the case of flesh-and-blood matriarchs. My answer was that I suffered no special strains, nothing which did not normally occur in any family relationship, or rather, any family relationship in which so much good will was generally prevalent.

In the first place, I was lucky in the Kohut children. In the second place, I did not enter their life as a traditional stepmother—I was, rather, as I put it from the start, "their other mother," and I always tried to remember that. True, I did forget it now and then, but that was because I was so enamored of them that my relationship often metamorphosed temporarily into something else—I was "their other sister" instead of "their other mother."

Of the eight Kohut children, six are alive, George and Valerie having died. There are Gisela,

Helen, Margaret, Louis, Eugene, Elsie. Louis is an invalid. Eugene lives in Washington and Elsie in Detroit. Helen has just returned to New York from Los Angeles, where she lived for eleven years. Margaret lives in New York. All the daughters but Elsie are widows.

I have five grandsons who were in the Army during the war, and my heart went up and down with the course of the campaigns in the various theatres in which they fought. All emerged sound and much the better for having served in their country's defense.

Every Sunday afternoon the Kohut family, those members who are in New York, gather in this room and our weekly reunions have a little of everything—merriment, nostalgia, reminiscence, current family concerns, talk of the grandchildren and what they are doing—like all families that have been together a long time.

Four years ago, although it seems much longer, I celebrated my eightieth birthday, and was amazed and happy over letters, telegrams, flowers received not only from people with whom I was currently in touch, but from people I hadn't seen in a long time. Needless to say, my family celebrated the day with great joy. In the midst of it I found myself wishing that my husband and my son, George, were there. My husband would have been one hundred and two years old, and George would have been seventy. It would have been fun.

Margaret has always been my joy. When I first married Alexander Kohut, I realized that Margaret had certain traits that were so rare that one could hardly believe she belonged among ordinary human beings. We called her Santa Margharita. She is now, especially during these years of my illness, the head of the family, holding their hands and keeping them together.

As long as she lives, I know the chain will not be broken. She lives in New York, and twice a day she telephones me—when she awakens and when she retires. Almost every afternoon she comes to visit me, and her arrival gives me an immediate spiritual uplift. If it has been a sacrifice—and I am not aware of any—to become the mother of a large family, surely Margaret has been one of the great compensations.

Of my Bettelheim family, only my sister Cyd is alive. Cyd is a grand and considerable person who has always, and to this day, been in the active current of things. The first part of her life was spent in social work—she was director of the social services of the Emanu-El Sisterhood—and for the last forty years she has owned and conducted the Tripp Lake Camp for Girls at Poland, Maine. At eighty she is still the spirit activating the camp, the attendance at which is full up for the next four years.

At her camp she has many girls who are grand-

children of women who were pupils of mine at the Kohut School for Girls. Cyd when in New York sees me every morning, and telephones me through the day.

Cyd was a good friend of Fiorello La Guardia, and through this friendship, both George and I got to know and love that great man. At one time—one of those brief periods when Mr. La Guardia was out of public office—he served as teacher of Latin for about six months at George's school, the Columbia Grammar. He was an excellent teacher, the boys loved him, but public life, which needed him more, soon reclaimed him.

A few days after he was elected Mayor of New York for the first time, Mr. La Guardia had a talk with me and told me he wanted me to serve in his administration as Commissioner of Welfare. I was seventy at the time and willing, but George opposed it, saying the responsibilities were too great and the strain of working every day at an office would be too much for me. He was right, of course, and I thanked the Mayor-elect and declined the flattering offer. It would have been too much of a strain.

But, such is fate, two months later I did have great responsibilities and did work very hard every day at an office desk. For, two months later, George died suddenly during the night, and I went over to his desk at the Columbia Grammar School and

busied myself for over two years with the administration of the school.

Fiorello La Guardia, who did so much for New York, and for the nation when he was in Congress, is ever a fond memory. It is a natural tendency among us mortals to take personal satisfaction in the eminence of the career of a friend, be the friendship ever so slight; it is flattering and heart-warming, as if we, ourselves, were participating in that career; and the hearts of all of us could always use more warmth. I am as susceptible as anyone in that regard, and when I have had some association with one of the great, it is at least something pleasant to talk about.

I like to talk, for instance, about the fact that I introduced two persons to each other who afterward did memorable work together in the public service—work that is part of history. The persons were Alfred E. Smith and Mrs. Henry Moskowitz (then Belle Israels).

From their meeting came that remarkable collaboration, with Mrs. Moskowitz serving as the New York Governor's alter ego, his amanuensis, his principal adviser and assistant in public affairs. Both were extraordinary persons in their own right; Mrs. Moskowitz was brilliant, far-seeing, politically shrewd, socially dedicated, and tireless and dynamic in her devotion to the Governor's career; and Governor Smith was whole-souled,

forthright, courageous, and a delight as a man, a citizen, a public servant.

The fact that I introduced them, instead of someone else doing so, is of no importance, but the thought of it, in any case, warms me.

VIII

THE KOHUT FOUNDATION

I HAVE just had a piece of news that not only thrills me, but that bridges a gap in the continuity of a delightful part of my life. Word has come that a manuscript that had been lost for fifteen years has just turned up again in Paris and is being printed and published for the Kohut Foundation. The manuscript is part of *A Lexicon to Josephus*, a work in many parts that was begun for the Kohut Foundation many years ago by Professor H. St. John Thackeray of Cambridge University, and continued after his death by Professor Ralph Marcus of Columbia University.

Recovery of a work that is a dictionary of the Greek Josephus is hardly front-page news, except to scholars, but to me it is part of an activity that has crisscrossed every other activity of mine for decades and has lent me much delight.

This particular portion of the manuscript had been given fifteen years ago to a printer in France, M. Guethner. He had been selected for it because his work in that particular field was most beautiful, and it was believed he could do an outstanding job, worthy of a new scholar's classic. It was ex-

pected, of course, that it would take a long time. But M. Guethner was not only a great printer, he was a man; and the legend of Europe in the late Thirties was that man was a hunted animal who had to think not only of his work, but of his life, and often had to move from place to place, assume aliases and what not. (The story of Europe during those tragic times was that the criminals operated in their own names and the decent people—many of them—had to have aliases in order to escape the criminals.)

M. Guethner did wonderful printing and publishing not only in French, but in Oriental tongues and in Greek and Latin, the languages of scholarship; and all scholarship was anathema and food for bonfires for the brute forces then riding to triumph. They had not yet arrived in Paris, but M. Guethner had premonitions they would, and he had in his custody many works of scholarship he had to protect. How he disposed of them, I do not know; all that I could learn was that M. Guethner had closed his shop in the Rue Jacob.

There was no answer to letters. Anne Morgan was going to France, and I asked her to look up M. Guethner and find out what was happening to the *Lexicon*. She could not locate him. I asked others; they were equally unsuccessful. He had vanished. He was heard of again briefly in Holland, but people I wrote to there couldn't find him. I asked the aid of people in England, in Switzerland, in

South America—any place a man might seek refuge (I thought, naturally, of the United States, too, but looking for him here was too big a job). M. Guethner must be somewhere; where? Perhaps the answer was that he was in a concentration camp.

I had two worries; one was the man, whom I hardly knew; the other was the manuscript; and I could worry about them independently of each other. The Nazi forces were seeking not only to murder people; with equal ferocity they wanted to murder learning.

The death of a precious manuscript was almost as abhorrent as the killing of a man, I felt; it was a stab at the best in man, was in fact a more direct way to destroy and enslave mankind. Not being a professional scholar myself, I could not know all the things that were in the *Lexicon*, but I invested the manuscript with a heart, a soul, a body, and I trembled for its safety. I saw it now in a bonfire, now as a castaway in a debris heap, now as an inmate in a philological concentration camp, in which jailers dressed in Gothic letters kicked it about.

Well, the manuscript has been found, and M. Guethner is back at work on it and I invest him with no more of my fears and concerns, and think of him only as a very fine printer.

Ever since I married a scholar and became the mother of a scholar, I have been aware of the ad-

ventures of books and manuscripts, and they have a special thrill and appeal for me that hold me quite thoroughly in their grip.

In the vicissitudes of a lifetime, I have had close associations with clergymen, educators, labor leaders, politicians, social workers. But as a group no people are as pleasant in memory to me as are the scholars, particularly the scholars in the field of the ancient. The mere word "scholar" may to some call up in imagination the musty, the dry-as-dust, but it isn't so for me. The scholar, as I know him, is someone who is terrifically excited or concerned about something that isn't happening at the moment; he is urgent about something that may have happened ten or fifteen centuries ago. That is why I love scholars; they are a corrective to current worries, a reminder that everything in the world doesn't absolutely depend on the thing that may be bothering one at the moment.

In a sense, you may call them escapists, a popular word nowadays, and I will not quarrel with you; I will only say that it isn't necessary for every one of us to be contemporary; when all of us worry about the same thing at the same time, we aren't any closer by that fact to the bettering of it; perhaps the contrary.

Once, I was in Europe while the Dreyfus case was raging and I was quite wrought up about it, and spoke of it to an Orientalist, a friend of my husband. "Isn't it awful?" I said. My Orientalist

agreed. "It was very awful," he said. "The Persians were certainly a great people, but their justice left something to be desired." It took me a little while to realize that my absent-minded friend was far away and in a remote century, and was thus able to have a temporary vacation from the Dreyfus case.

In 1921, when we were having a minor depression in America, I talked to Professor Clay, the Yale Orientalist, about the depression. But Dr. Clay, at the moment, was deep in the monetary problems of the ancient Amorite Empire, and in his far-off absorption, he couldn't make head or tail out of what I was saying about the American monetary problem. This was probably a good thing in itself, because, as I realized later, I didn't know as much about it as I thought I did.

Scholars in a group are delightful; their detachment from things of the moment often gives them an exuberance, a playfulness that is refreshing to watch. Each year at Marienbad, for a period of about ten years, we had a rendezvous and vacation with a group of scholars. It was the event of the year I always looked forward to. I might have had many concerns and cares during the year, but these were all shed at Marienbad. The scholars did not wear their learning with solemnity. Their lack of contemporary preoccupations and obsessions made them all the keener in their appreciation of the moment, their seizure of it with fun and gusto.

They seemed far more alive than the men of current affairs, as though they were visitors from another era enjoying the privilege of looking in on a contemporary scene and savoring it.

My son George was never happier than when he was with such a group, at Marienbad or anywhere else. Scholars, book collectors, manuscript hunters—these are the happy few who manage to live their life on the best terms. George had been oriented their way from an early age, and from them he learned their secrets of happiness. When still a boy he began to haunt bookshops, browse, and acquaint himself with the oddities of collectors. Through his father he was aware of some of the world's great scholars, and when he became old enough he went to Berlin to study under one of the greatest of them, Moritz Steinschneider—as piquant and charming a character as one would like to meet—an octogenarian mariner on the sea of learning who sailed his massive vessel as lightly as if it were a skiff.

From Steinschneider, his first master, he went on to others, and as a finished scholar he communed with his peers, and was particularly delighted with his last great trio—Professors Clay and Torrey of Yale, and Professor George Foote Moore of Harvard. To see him with any of these was a joy.

In addition to the scholars, he knew the book collectors, professional and amateur; and they respected his judgments and asked his opinions.

There was a special kind of excitement about this world that often gave our home the flavor of an international detective mystery.

One day George was looking very preoccupied and mysterious, pacing about and not hearing anything I said to him. I finally asked him what was wrong, and he burst out, "I must go to Algiers!"

Algiers—it brought up film romance, the Casbah, odalisques, cutthroats—was George in middle age succumbing to the infantilisms of Hollywood? It was cause for concern.

It was, indeed. In Algiers, he said, there was an old bookshop, and in this bookshop there was a manuscript—the record of certain families that had escaped the Inquisition and had settled in North Africa. Some book beagle had told him of it the night before. The Algiers bookshop owner didn't realize how important it was; he might sell it to someone for the equivalent of a few dollars, and it might be lost forever. The only place for such a document was Yale. George was very busy at the time with a school reorganization, but he felt he must do something about this personally. He must leave all his affairs and catch a boat, there was no time to be lost.

Fortunately, there wasn't a boat leaving for several days; a very slow boat, too; the whole trip both ways would take him twenty-five days. I was able to persuade him that he could do it much faster by radioing a collectors' agent in Paris who

had a correspondent in North Africa. He did, and he secured the manuscript in five days. It kept him from getting into a mess with his school reorganization, but he felt cheated for quite a time, as if good sense had robbed him of a great adventure. I had to make it up to him by obtaining a Heine item and having the maid bring it to him with his breakfast tray.

George's Heine collection—manuscripts, letters, first editions, and copies of the magazines, almanacs and newspapers in which individual poems and stories first appeared—was one of his beloved treasures. Quite a situation with Yale developed over this collection. George had written Yale's chief librarian, Dr. Andrew Keogh, that he intended to give the Heine items to the university. As a result of this, there began a lively kind of game between George and Dr. Carl F. Schreiber, the curator of the William A. Speck Collection of Goetheana at Yale. Dr. Schreiber wrote that George was obviously such a lover of Heine that it would really be too much of a wrench for him to part with his love; he really ought not to do it. Yale was always eager, of course, to enrich its literary treasures, but not at the cost of depriving Dr. Kohut of what was so near and dear to him. So he kept dissuading George.

Writing of it later, Dr. Schreiber said, "My reflections on this matter—long and obstinately persevered in—were becoming acutely dangerous

to the charge I had been appointed to keep. And yet I could not bring myself to condemn roundly my credo which had gradually evolved out of my interesting relations with Dr. Kohut. . . . It took all kinds of collectors to make a world . . . but he alone collected gloriously who had the requisite and abiding love of his subject—to whom every addition meant bliss, every lack a lessening of himself. And what must be the state of mind of this glorious collector who parted with his treasures prematurely? Frankly, it would be impossible for me to translate myself into his position. He should be prohibited from impoverishing himself.”

And so it went on—determination from George, dissuasion from Dr. Schreiber. The long and short of it, though, was that George finally acquired another large Heine collection of some four hundred volumes, and then he gave his entire Heine material to Yale. Of this action he wrote:

“While I confess that it is quite a wrench, this parting with anything touching Heine, who has been one of the real joys of my life, I am sensible enough of the claims of the *Wissenschaft* to have a feeling that the sooner the collection can be made available for purposes of research the better.”

While collecting literary treasures, running schools and such, George was ever busy with producing his own scholarly work. The bibliography of his published writings contains more than two hundred items. His studies include such widely variegated subjects as Moses Mendelssohn, Kos-

suth, Heine, folk legends of Hungary, the Inquisition in South America, Ezra Stiles, Sancho Panza and the Talmud, stories from the rabbis, ancient Jewish martyrdoms in Mexico and the Philippines, the Jamaica anti-slavery movement and the Jews, royal Hebraists, and many editors' introductions to the works of other writers.

Writing in a style full of grace and poetry, he preferred, nevertheless, to be a scholarly fount for other writers rather than a literary enterprise all for himself. And I believe his greatest pride was in helping other scholars of great potentialities to fulfill themselves and leave the world the published benefits of their studies.

When I think of the works of learning that George made available to the world through the Kohut Foundation, I am proud for him, too. In the Yale Oriental Series, for example, there was Professor Clay's monographs on the Amorites of Palestine, Professor Torrey's edition of the earliest known account of the Mohammedan conquest of Egypt and North Africa, the so-called *Futuh Misr of Ibn Abd al-Hakam*. And the Arabic original of Rabbenu Nissim's tenth-century *Pleasant Book of Consolation*. An anthology of Hebrew writings of Christian scholars from Reuchlin to Renan. Joseph Al-Qirqisani's tenth-century *Book of Lights*, edited and translated by Drs. Leon Nemoy and Joseph J. Schwartz of Yale.

The Yale Oriental Series was only one point of

issuance for publications sponsored by the Foundation. In the New York Jewish Institute of Religion branch, for example, there has been published an edition and translation of the treatise *Aboth* by the eminent rabbinic scholar Canon R. Travers Herford. Also an index to the newly published critical edition of the works of Philo Judaeus. A critical variorum text of the Greek book of Joshua prepared by Dr. Max L. Margolis. The first parts of a dictionary of the Greek text of Josephus, the work of Dr. J. St. John Thackeray and Dr. Ralph Marcus. A comprehensive grammar of Mishnaic Hebrew, done by Dr. M. H. Segal of the University of Jerusalem.

The Vienna branch of the Foundation published the monumental *Flora of the Jews*, Dr. Immanuel Low's great work on the plant life of Palestine and the Near East—a work of which a great scholar once said that it alone would be sufficient justification for the Foundation's existence. Vienna also published two notable monographs by Professor V. Aptowitzer on the political parties of the Maccabean period, and on Cain and Abel in the Haggada and cognate non-Jewish sources. Also a magnificent photographic reproduction of the *Kaufman Codex of the Mishnah*—a marvelously preserved and clear ancient text which is invaluable for the pursuit of researches in the field of Mishnaic exegesis. Also a volume of supplements to the *Aruch Completum*, my husband's own great

work, with contributions by many noted scholars; and a volume of studies in memory of Chief Rabbi H. P. Chajes of Vienna.

The branch at Budapest published the joint work of a group of Hungarian scholars—a complete edition of the Hebrew-Arabic dictionary of Tanhum Yerushalmi, a brilliant philologist and exegetist of the Thirteenth Century.

At Berlin there was published a monograph on the Aramaic syntax of the Babylonian Talmud by Dr. M. Schlesinger. Also, with a subvention from the Foundation, there was published at Berlin the first two volumes of a comprehensive thesaurus of Hebrew philosophical terminology.

These were only part of the Foundation's publishing activities. There was the Hebrew-Arabic dictionary of David Al-Fasi, a contemporary of the great Saadiah Gaon and a precursor of Johah Ibn Ganah—prepared by Dr. S. L. Skoss of Dropsie College. There was *Fasti Judici*, prepared by Professor Solomon Zeitlin. A monograph dealing with the mysterious Jewish sect at Damascus. A volume on the literary traditions of the Abyssinian Jews prepared by Dr. Jacques Faitlowitch. This was to be followed by monographs on the Jews of China and India, and by works on the Khazars, that people of South Russia which was converted to Judaism a thousand years ago and which was eventually destroyed by the rising force of the Russians.

In launching this project for scholarship George was desirous of honoring his father's name and mainly desirous that the remnants of Jewish learning through the centuries should not only be preserved as a continuity of Hebrew thought, but should be made available for the burning of the eternal light of wisdom and faith.

In his carrying out of his dream, he not only derived the satisfaction of achievement, but he had a great deal of fun along the way. And so did I.

Some of the finest friendships of our lives were acquired through the Foundation. We have had house guests who brought kingdoms and empires with them. We have had explorers and adventurers who brought to us the most dazzling trophies from their conquests of the past. We have had love and friendship and feasts of the mind more gorgeous than anything a current ruler could either command or imagine. And it has all been simple.

To all of these things that George initiated I fell heir, and I have been very conscious and proud of my inheritance. The Kohut Foundation and its works continue to thrill me. In charge of them at the present time is Dr. Alexander Marx of the Jewish Theological Seminary—a rare, beautiful soul who, in the Nineties, was a fellow student of George under Steinschneider, and who is today an eminence in scholarship. I am ill and confined to my room and I do not see the outside, but it is a

fine thing to know that Dr. Marx is directing the Foundation.

The Kohut Library at Yale is in equally good hands—there it is Dr. Leon Nemoy who looks after these treasures—a monument to my husband and son which I will never see again physically, but which in the spirit and the mind's eye has for me the reality of living things.

IX

"THE WOMAN RICH IN TIME"

TWO summers ago a radio program dramatized some elements of my life and broadcast them under the title, "The Woman Rich in Time." The program was "The Eternal Light," which is given nation-wide dissemination every Sunday by the National Broadcasting Company and its affiliated stations. In the fictional story which was woven around me, I was of service to a mother stricken over the loss of a child. The mother came to my bedside as to one who had seen much sorrow and tragedy in a long life, and who was able from the store of her experience to give the mother the solace and the courage to go on.

Some portions of my own early life, taken from my autobiography and transformed to suit the line of the story, were dramatized. There were radio players impersonating Rebekah Kohut as a child, Rebekah Kohut as a young married woman, and Rebekah Kohut as a matriarch rich in time. It was quite an experience for me to listen to this projection of my vanished yesterdays on my bedside radio.

It was tenderly touching, and I hope it did some

good somewhere, brought solace and courage to someone. That would have been a useful, valuable achievement for those who conceived this story and carried it through. I personally had done nothing in the matter of the broadcast except to sit, so to speak, for a kind of idealized radio portrait.

But I do know one thing. At least it brought solace and courage to me.

The broadcast apparently had millions of listeners, and after it was over a good many persons wrote to me. Some were friends, some I had known or met here or there, the casual encounters of the human voyage, and many were strangers impelled to write to the subject of the drama. It was exciting and comforting to be so sought out via the mails; it gave me a glow and an upsurge of spirit, and made my bed somewhat easier to endure.

That a radio program could produce such warmth and good feeling among so many people was a sign of the great power of this public medium, and I wished it could be used more and more to bring the hearts of humanity together.

I found myself thinking what a wonderful thing it would be if there were some kind of master of ceremonies who devoted himself to devising means and functions for bringing celebration to the hearts of the old, the lonely, the forgotten—something akin to this radio program, at least in the warmth it produced.

In my own case I have had a very abundant life, enriched as much by its sublimated sorrows as by its pleasures and recognitions; and I have family and friends to ease and lighten the burden of remaining time. But there are so many others who must spend their last days in loneliness, and who, in their obscurity, have much to be honored for—goodness, simplicity, sacrifice, the general work and wear of life. But it takes others to recognize this and to do something about it, and so my dream was of a person, or persons, or organization, which did just that—discovered and celebrated the unknown and the lonely, and thus broke down the barriers that exist between so many of us on the human journey, making therefore for a finer and closer unity in life. We are all together on the journey from the cradle to the grave—why not make it as pleasant and as heartfelt a journey as possible?

Such thoughts were not new to me. In my own small way I have always been a meddler in other people's affairs, and wished I could be a larger meddler. Everyone, as the saying goes, is entitled to his own private life, and the truth of that is that everyone resents being left entirely to his own private life. I have always thought it a good thing to meddle, for instance, in the life of an unemployed person and find him or her a job. I have often meddled in the cases of persons of achievement suffering a decline of the spirit, conspiring to

lift them out of it in various ways—sometimes a banquet, sometimes the instigation of an influx of friends, sometimes the presenting of an award or some kind of grant, with all due ceremony. I wish I had done more meddling of that kind.

I am a firm believer in ceremony, occasions, gifts—all that panoply which to very sophisticated people is anathema, but to most people is manna. I believe in celebrating the seasons, friendships, achievements, anniversaries — anything which takes life out of the routine of mere existence. It was that way in my father's home and my husband's home, and I have continued it. We made ceremonies of everything, and so we crowned the ordinary with significance and enriched the present with events that would gladden our memories in a future time.

The incident of the radio program brings to mind another and earlier event that brought me much cheer. It had to do with the writing of *My Portion*. When I undertook at that time to delineate some of my past I had only one thought in mind: how to occupy myself during an illness that incapacitated me temporarily for active life. I did not dream that through this pastime I was making for a further enrichment and for the garnering of much joy.

When the book came out extraordinary things happened. I received letters from hundreds of people I had forgotten, together with accounts of

how they had passed their lives since the days we crossed paths. I discovered members of the family I did not know, and became aware of their odysseys here and there on the globe. Every mail brought something new and exciting. Thus, the mere act of writing one's story eventually brought to that life story much more fullness and roundness than it had previously had. That was how *My Portion* brought me many extra portions of happiness.

X

HATS, ROOSEVELTS, AND A LITTLE GIRL

FRIDAY is quite a day. Every Friday morning at 8:30 I hear the voice of "the little milliner of Beekman Place." Miss Brenauer, who started making hats for my daughters and me sixty years ago when we lived at Beekman Place, is now over eighty, and is still my friend. For the past twenty-five years, whenever we were in town, Miss Brenauer has hardly ever missed making a Friday morning telephone call to wish me a good Sabbath. These calls are precious to me.

I was always proud and happy to feel that we could afford to buy for our daughters the lovely hats that Miss Brenauer conceived and fashioned. But Miss Brenauer to me is far more than hats. She is a link with my departed youth, a signpost of age that I cherish equally, and an overture to the Sabbath eve which, with ceremony or without (without ceremony these bedridden days), is always an event for me.

Soon after Miss Brenauer has telephoned I generally receive a call from Dr. Dora Askowith of

Hunter College, also wishing me a good Sabbath. And then, when the mail is brought in, I receive my weekly Sabbath letter from my dear friend, Professor Torrey of Yale. There are many other Sabbath recurrences that are pleasant to me, and I treasure them. But I particularly savor the weekly trio of Sabbath messages from Miss Brenauer, Dr. Askowith and Dr. Torrey.

Speaking of hats makes me think of one time when I was not true to Miss Brenauer. That was the time when I met Mrs. James Roosevelt, the President's mother. It was at the home of Mrs. Henry Morgenthau, Jr. When I was introduced to her she said, "I don't like your hat." She said I simply must go for my next hat to her milliner, "a wonderful little woman," and she gave me a note to her milliner, telling her to do her best for me. Her paeans of praise induced me to go to her "wonderful little woman," who did proceed to do her best for me.

The next time I was due to meet Mrs. Roosevelt, I put on this new creation. Mrs. Roosevelt, when she saw me, said, "I don't like your hat. You simply must go to my milliner." I said nothing about this headpiece being the exact result of her counsel, but I had much inward amusement. Then there was another meeting at Mrs. Morgenthau's at which Mrs. Roosevelt was expected, and this time I was determined to wear one of my best Brenauers. Mrs. Roosevelt was delighted with my

hat, and said, "Now that is really something. Aren't you glad you went to my milliner?" She was so pleased, in fact, that, upon leaving, she asked me to run up to her house with her and have some sandwiches. Well, we had already had sandwiches where we were, but I went with her and we had some more (and very good, too).

Mrs. Roosevelt was, of course, very proud of her son. When she came into the room the first time I met her she said, "I have made a resolution. I am not going to talk about Franklin today. Please help me keep it." No sooner was she seated, however, than she forgot all about it, and said, "Franklin called me up last night and told me a very interesting thing," etc.

Mrs. Roosevelt told me that the President always telephoned her every night before he went to sleep, no matter what the hour was, even at 2 or 3 A.M. I asked her if this meant that sometimes he had to wake her up in order to say good-night to her. "Good heavens, no!" she replied. "I never go to sleep until I get the call."

One of my best friends is Martha McGee. Martha is eight years old. Her father was superintendent of the apartment house where I have lived during all of my illness. Martha was brought to my bedside when she was three weeks old, and ever since we have been great friends. As she grew up a little table and chair were placed for her in my

room, and she played there with her toys, ate there frequently, and to her I was Grandma Kohut. She played constantly in the room while I had visitors, and she often took part in the conversation and made comments on my visitors after they were gone.

One of my frequent visitors was Professor Louis Finkelstein, president of the Jewish Theological Seminary. Professor Finkelstein has a magnificent beard which fascinated Martha much and became, in her eyes, a necessary appendage for all professors. One time another professor was visiting me, and was introduced to Martha, along with his academic title. Martha looked askance at him and maintained a very reserved attitude all during his visit. When he was gone, she whispered to me, with great concern in her eyes, "You mustn't believe him when he says he is a professor. Where is his beard?"

Martha's family moved to New Jersey two years ago, and so I only see her on special occasions when she is brought to New York. She flatteringly misjudges my influence. She paid me a visit one St. Patrick's Day and told me she was going to the parade and would sit next to President Truman on the reviewing stand. I asked her how that was going to be arranged, and to her it was very simple. She was going to tell the policemen that she was Mrs. Kohut's grandchild, and they would, of course, find a place for her next to the President.

Another time, when she visited me, I asked her how she liked New Jersey. She said, "It's all right, but there's too many Jew women there." I was distressed to realize that this lovely child with so much genuine heart and sweetness in her was already picking up wisps of anti-Semitic hate in the air and that prejudice, unbeknownst, was entering her soul and was on the way to blighting what was meant to be a splendid person. I think I dispelled that. I said that was not a nice way to talk about the people of the mother of Jesus, also a Jewish woman, and that I and many people she had met in my house since her infancy, and whom she loved and who loved her, were Jews. It surprised and troubled her, and she turned it over much in her little head. I explained what prejudice was, how it grew, and how it twisted and distorted people who could have been the finest, most loving creatures. I never heard such remarks from her again.

Time and again I have retold all the Bible stories to Martha. It was a pleasant thing for me, because it brought back the time when I was sixteen and taught a Bible class of children of about the same age as Martha. It was pleasant for Martha, too, because all these stories and characters fascinated her and I had to tell them to her over and over again. Her favorite was the story of the Tower of Babel. To her it was the Empire State Building, and she could never get over the fact that everybody in this fabulous building of hers spoke a dif-

ferent language and couldn't understand each other, and so had to quarrel.

While re-telling this tale, it occurred to me that the Tower of Babel legend has a modern variation—not a very pleasant one either. In this variation the people are not thrown into confusion and discord by speaking different tongues, but by speaking the same language but with the words having different meanings. In the various political agitations of the day, for example, all the conflicting factions are using the same slogans against each other. We of the West use the word “democracy” as the rallying cry of our cause, and we believe in it; but the Russian dictatorship, for some strange reason, uses the same word. Surely, we both cannot be meaning the same thing. I understand “democracy” when it is applied to the United States, but I certainly do not understand it when it is applied equally by the totalitarian Russians, the reactionary Greek government, the Yugoslav dictatorship, and by both the Red Chinese and the corrupt government of Chiang Kai-shek. It is so with other words, too, such as “freedom,” and it makes for a veritable modern Babel of confusion. “Freedom of enterprise” is a fine thing, but when monopolists demand it too, and when censors demand “freedom of the press,” my poor head spins.

To go back to Martha McGee, her little table and chair are still in my room, giving it a nursery touch that helps soften some of its sick room aus-

terity. I hope Martha will keep visiting me. Her entrance always gladdens my old heart. She sings out, she dances across the room, she recounts her adventures, and I, encased in this ancient envelope, am a child again too.

XI

A SPIRITUAL HERO

IF I HAD it to do all over again—I have been asked—and if I were a young mother with children, what would I do about their religious upbringing? This is a thorny problem for some people, but only because all avoided problems become thorny. My answer is simple: I am in favor of a thoroughly religious upbringing for children. I have had ample opportunity for observing those who have provided various substitutes for religion, both for themselves and their children. I cannot say that they have been very effective, or that the result has produced happy people (in the best sense of the word) or successful people (still in the best sense of the word).

The excuses for neglecting religious observance, churchgoing, etc., have been many—among them, that the religions do not meet modern conditions, that churchgoing is inconvenient, the ritual archaic, and other excuses. These are the objections of so-called practical people. Well, practicality and realism, too, are fetishes like other fetishes, and lead their worshipers as far astray as do the cults

of pure moonshine. Nobody collapses as quickly under adversity as does the "practical man."

Spirituality, on the other hand, is really and intensely practical. It is the ordered discipline of the spirit that enables people to meet any fate and to rise above the hazards of fortune. It pays better, more satisfactory dividends than the millionaire's anxious investments and speculations, and is a better guardian than the bank. If religion involves ritual, churchgoing, a daily routine, a habit, so much the better. Ritual serves as a touchstone. Ceremonies at the synagogue or church, the lighting up of the Sabbath candles at home on Friday evenings—these are not, in themselves, the all in all. Rather, they are the keys that open the gates for the flooding of the spirit with the true verities—prayer, humbleness before God, a banishment of the strifes, the vanities, the envies that pit people against one another.

We are not able, most of us, to provide by ourselves the occasion and the setting for the invocation of the religious spirit. Great, inspired, patient, anonymous, forgotten men through the centuries, men blessed with a profound knowledge of what is best and worst in man, have toiled to provide a spiritual apparatus by which people could maintain a good and honorable life amidst the confusions and perils of this world. Let us be thankful and let us avail ourselves of it.

That is why I would most certainly want a

spiritual upbringing for the children of today; they need it more than did the children of my youth. Knowledge of the world is not enough. Information alone does not keep people out of the jungle of falsity, hatred, strife. Knowledge without spirit is valueless.

In my own case formal worship has been impossible for the past six years, and so I get my religious services via the radio. On Friday night I hear divine services broadcast from Temple Emanu-El. On Saturday mornings there is an inspiring service from the little synagogue at Lawrence, Long Island, presided over by Rabbi Judah Cahn. On Sunday morning there is the "Message of Israel," and in the afternoon I listen to "The Eternal Light."

I find, too, after more than seventy-five years of reading the Bible, that there is always something new in it when I open it at random every day, and it brings me comfort and inspiration. I know that my father and my husband would bless me if they realized how much I need God and how often I turn to Him.

In ordinary times one is prone to discuss religious leaders as if they were mere personalities—we compare this one's voice with that one's presence—we even good-humoredly (I hope) make small jokes about their relations with their communicants, their idiosyncrasies, how they feel about

each other, and so forth. That is all natural, human, and perhaps inevitable. But, in the hour of real spiritual necessity, when fortitude and guidance are needed by us all, we have seen some spiritual leaders reveal themselves as the pure essence of the courageous spirit—fearless, concerned with humanity rather than their personal fate, making us feel once more that it can be honorable to be a human being.

I am thinking particularly at this moment of Rabbi Leo Baeck, once of Berlin, now of the United States. Rabbi Baeck was a fellow student of my son George in Berlin in the Eighteen Nineties. The two of them studied together with the great Steinschneider—which in Hebrew pedagogy was like pianists having studied with Liszt and violinists with Auer. After their studies their paths separated—George returning to the United States for a short career as a rabbi and a longer career as an educator, bibliophile and benefactor of scholarship, and Dr. Baeck pursuing the rabbinical career in Germany.

I kept hearing frequently about Dr. Baeck—he had a most distinguished career in the pulpit. He enjoyed a reputation as a great theologian and scholar, author of that standard work of Jewish religious philosophy, *The Essence of Judaism*. His abilities were fully recognized and appreciated, for eventually he became the Chief Rabbi of Berlin.

These were great honors, but the greatest distinction was yet to come. The Hitler curse fell upon the world, instituting the reign of the concentration camp and the gas chamber. Dr. Baeck was sent to a concentration camp in which there were thousands of his fellow Jews. He refused to consider himself as a prisoner, saying instead, "This is my congregation," and he insisted upon ministering to them. The cynical, sneering Nazis thought it was a great joke and let him do it—after all, they cackled, these people were done for, and it was very comical. Dr. Baeck bolstered the morale of his concentration camp congregants, instilled them with fortitude and dignity, giving them a strength and consecration in the midst of tragedy so that the prisoners in their moral stature dwarfed their brutal little jailers.

The Nazis were very preoccupied with the narcissism of their then world triumphs, and it took them about two years to realize that this particular concentration camp—for all its beatings, cruelties, executions—was not a success, not at all a singing tribute to their master-race glory—rather it was a puzzling defeat, something their great minds could not grasp. At a time when whole populations elsewhere were shaken, demoralized, corrupted by the Nazi legend of inevitable domination, here was a prison inside Germany which had to accept Nazi cruelty but did not accept Nazi triumph, was not

impressed and overawed with it; morale among the prisoners was very high.

One day, after two years in the camp, Dr. Baeck was told he was free to get out. But Dr. Baeck said, "No. This is my congregation, and I need their prayers as they need mine. I wish to remain. I must remain." The Nazi jailers had never before met such a situation—one of their involuntary guests refusing to be rid of their bestial hospitality. They did not know what to do—and they did nothing. Dr. Baeck remained. And he will perhaps be remembered more for this great act than for his previous memorable career in ordinary times.

Last year Dr. Baeck came to the United States for a brief visit. The demands on his time were very great. Yet in the few crowded days that he spent in New York, he found time to escape from the appointment schedule and spend an entire morning at my bedside talking over old days in Berlin when he and George were fellow students. He told me that all his life, whenever he thought of America, his first reflection was that it was the country where George lived. It was thrilling for me to have as my sick-room visitor this man whose greatness of soul came to full fruition inside a concentration camp.

This year Dr. Baeck has returned to America, to serve as a visiting professor at the Hebrew Union College. He has visited me again, and it

was equally thrilling. America is truly the gainer when men of this spirit join its community.

While distinguished Europeans contribute to our national greatness by making new homes here, there are plenty of examples of American greatness which has been exported to other parts of the world. One of the most noteworthy examples was that of the late Judah Leon Magnes. Dr. Magnes was one of the finest human beings I have known. As a young rabbi from California who settled in New York around the turn of the century, he was a splendid specimen of the vigorous idealistic American spirit that was coming to the rabbinate and giving it new life. It was possible to disagree with Dr. Magnes on many things—and one did—but it was impossible not to respect and admire him. Warm-hearted, consecrated, selfless, he was the kind of man upon whom people wanted to shower adoration and honors but who evaded them. He was that curious anomaly—a public figure who is personally shy; and he had a dread of being merely successful.

As a very young man he was picked as associate rabbi of Temple Emanu-El, New York's most eminent Jewish congregation—in the expectation, no doubt, that he would eventually become its chief shining light. But Dr. Magnes suddenly resigned his pulpit, feeling that the more or less affluent congregants of Temple Emanu-El could be best

served by others. For himself, he chose to work among levels of the Jewish community where there was much to be done. His concern was the community rather than the congregation, and his work was named *Kehillah* (community). Changing from pulpit to desk, and from sermon to heart-to-heart talk, he toiled without publicity to mediate labor disputes, bring peace between feuding tradesmen, reduce racketeering and crime, and he engaged in a hundred other daily activities—all dedicated to helping the community practice effectively what so many ministers preached ineffectively. He was available to any group or individual with a problem—and yet, when he faced a newspaper reporter who wanted to write something about his work, he blushed like a neophyte and became suddenly inarticulate. “Some other time,” he would say, and that was the last heard of it.

Dr. Magnes fell under a cloud during the years of the First World War because he was an uncompromising pacifist who opposed war under any circumstances, even in a righteous cause. I and many others disagreed with him, feeling that militaristic Germany was a menace to the world which could not be met by pacifism, and that pacifism against a monster was a suicidal attitude which favored the monster. But Dr. Magnes persisted in his pacifism, and became quite unpopular among many of his American co-religionists.

Shortly after the war he went to Palestine and devoted himself to education there. He became the president of the glorious Hebrew University on Mount Scopus, one of the great citadels of learning in the modern world.

But here, too, Dr. Magnes followed his own path. He acquired unpopularity among many militant Zionists by maintaining that Palestine should be a joint homeland for Jews and Arabs, that it should be bi-national in form, and that the destiny of the Jews and Arabs lay in harmony and co-operation rather than in separateness. Many, of course, disagreed with him, but no one could deny that his stand was based on the highest ideals and the noblest motives. Without going into the merits of these arguments pro and con, one can only admire Dr. Magnes for his courage, his stubbornness in support of his beliefs, and his pure idealism.

Zionists who differed with him are proud of him as a man, as a leader, as a voice. A people reaching toward greatness of spirit must cherish its dissidents as well as its yea-sayers; that is democracy at its best. And the Hebrew University, with its fine Hebrew and Arab studies, is a monument that makes the Jewish people very proud of Dr. Magnes.

He was taken seriously ill a year ago and came back to the United States for treatment. It was a shock to me to learn that he had died.

As the daughter and wife of notable rabbis and the friend of numerous others, it is a pleasure and a privilege for me to remark upon their fineness of spirit. I have cited Rabbis Baeck and Magnes here, but I can also think of a good many others worthy to be honored for their dedication of soul.

XII

VISITORS TO A SICKBED

AS ONE lies and waits, one is inordinately pleased and flattered by any little attention one gets—a visit, a telephone call, a letter, flowers. Every visit, however necessarily brief, is a boon, a treasure, lingering in the memory, savored as a child savors a toy. This it is to be the prisoner of enforced idleness.

A visit from Dr. Baeck is an event that excites and stimulates me for days—it is like a visitation from wisdom and heroism, and in Dr. Baeck I am able to see an epitome of my own people at their best, and it comforts me.

Particularly heart-warming was a visit by that great English Jewess, the Honorable Lillian Montagu, who was a delegate to the World Congress of Jewish Women over which I presided. She and her sister, daughters of Lord Swaythling, have done notable work. They devoted their fortune to the establishment of a London settlement house. The two sisters live and work there, and their house is famous for its communal and social achievements.

During the two wars I gave numerous American

soldiers going overseas letters of introduction to Miss Montagu. She always received them in motherly fashion and helped make pleasant their sojourn in London.

Miss Montagu's purpose in coming to America this latest time was to make an address in Boston before the annual meeting of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. While she was in New York she gave a dinner at the Hotel Shelton to fifty of her London girls who had married American soldiers and had settled here.

I have had other recent, pleasant visitors, among them Anne Morgan, with whom I was affiliated in the American Women's Association and other organizations, and Erna Patek, with whom I share the memories of the World Congress of Jewish Women. Mrs. Patek told me she was going back to Austria to try to reclaim what might be left of her fortune there, and would then go to Palestine for the rest of her life. I remember that when the World Congress was convened there were so many delegates of different nationalities that we needed an official interpreter. Mrs. Patek volunteered to serve in that capacity. "I speak seven languages," she said. "That may not be enough, but I will do the best I can."

To one long accustomed to intense activity these visits bring a little of the outside world, but there is still so much time in what appears to be so little time. I work at writing these memoirs, but I can't

do much of that either at a time, and hours go in reverie in which many characters already gone from this world flash in and out of consciousness, and I have an urge to call to them to stop and visit for a minute.

I long to have a talk again with Lillian Wald, that great woman whose "House on Henry Street," with its nursing services for the poor and destitute, is a greater monument to the human heart than are the palaces of kings. I haven't much left to give in any form, but I think I would give it all for a couple of minutes with Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Schiff, who did so much for so many people, and especially for me. Henrietta Szold, Fidelia Jewett, Mary Dreier, countless others. I give up trying to name them.

Let me say, instead, that I long for visitations of the kind of spirit that all these people brought to me, for I am in debt to everyone I ever knew. Some brought me cheer, some a vista, some a reproof that I needed, a correction, some gave material help, some their own example either of wisdom or of folly; some a smile; and I have even profited from indifference.

I am glad for them all, and both glad and sorry that I have lived so long, grateful for last-minute opportunities for observing a changing world, sorry that I have outlived so many of my friends, melancholy and envious at the reading of obituary notices of passing contemporaries, suddenly happy

at the entrance of a laughing child, serene at the promise of life for others.

The living and the dead mingle somehow in the panorama of my thoughts . . . my father and Herbert Lehman . . . my husband and Alexander Marx . . . Herzl and Weizmann . . . my son and Charles Torrey . . . my sister and Henrietta Szold . . . Lillian Montagu and Lillian Wald . . . and ever so many others.

I think of Louis Marshall, and of his first visit to us when he was a young lawyer in Syracuse. He had come to New York to consult my husband on some points of Talmudical law in connection with a case he was trying. My husband remarked later to me that here was a young man who would become one of the greatest lawyers of his time and one of the great Jews. He was right on both counts. Mr. Marshall became one of America's most renowned constitutional lawyers, famous for his cases before the United States Supreme Court, and he became the leader of his people, their ablest and most tireless advocate and defender. His legal firm, in the matter of corporation law, was the greatest in demand, but Mr. Marshall was more concerned with aiding the Jews than with mere money making, and in time he gave more of his efforts to his people than to the service of great clients. His partner, Samuel Untermyer, who was accustomed to getting million-dollar fees for his handling of im-

portant corporation cases, was at times impatient with Mr. Marshall's deepening absorption in Jewish matters, since this absorption was denying Mr. Marshall's talents to many of the firm's great clients. But Mr. Marshall had come to feel that his one and only client was the Jewish people, and the usual situation was reversed—it was he who gave the fee, both in his incomparable services and in his financial contributions to the aid of his fellow Jews. Later, however, Mr. Untermeyer himself, in his last years, began to devote his services to his people rather than to the great corporations of the land.

The two men were entirely different. Mr. Marshall's brilliance and perception were within a frame of solid, unspectacular presentation, with its roots in basic law. He was the kind of distinguished advocate whose arguments were savored and appreciated by the justices of the United States Supreme Court. Mr. Untermeyer was dazzling, brilliant, unexpected, dangerous to an opponent. As a cross-examiner he was without peer, and he was equally famous as a negotiator and arbitrator.

At various times he lent his services as counsel to Congressional investigating committees—notably the famous Pujos Money Trust investigation—and in such cases he was a holy terror to anyone who had anything to hide. While examining a witness he could work out in his head all the large figures of complicated transactions, keep himself

a dozen questions ahead of the witness, go along with his questions gently, blandly, as if very little were at stake—and suddenly the witness was in a trap, very flustered, with Mr. Untermeyer becoming ever more mercilessly gentle. He was not that way with everyone, but he particularly liked to be that way when facing a personage who was powerful, clever, and arrogant. It was a stimulating challenge to him, which he usually met.

People of another generation may remember the duel in the Congressional Money Trust hearing between Mr. Untermeyer and the elder John D. Rockefeller. Mr. Rockefeller was a formidable witness—bland, unperturbed, inscrutable—he was rarely available for that kind of hearing, and in any case no legal light had ever been able to fluster him. It was a very peculiar hearing—all devoted to extremely complicated transactions which few could follow. I am sure that if the principals had not been Mr. Rockefeller and Mr. Untermeyer, the auditors would either have fallen asleep or would have left the hearing room in search of more understandable entertainment. And yet no one left, because of a feeling that the duel was an Olympian one, with the gladiators of finance battling on such a plane that lesser mortals could not be expected to understand it. And then the patience of the audience was rewarded. Drama appeared. Mr. Rockefeller was suddenly very angry. Mr. Untermeyer had made him admit some-

thing he didn't want to admit; he had somehow eased it out of him. For the life of me I couldn't understand what it was, and I'm sure very few others were able to grasp it. Finance, though it is supposed to deal with material things, is hardly an exact science; it is as mythical and mystical as the lore of Bulfinch and Frazer; and I could see the inquisitor and the financier grappling with some money matter as mysterious as the intrigues of Zeus with the other gods.

It must be remembered, of course, that there were two Rockefellers in John D., Senior—the early acquisitive one, and the later distributory one. At the time of that hearing Mr. Rockefeller was reaching the end of his fortune-making and was beginning those notable contributions to the social welfare of America which have made the name of Rockefeller a glorious one among public benefactors.

A financier whose friendship I treasured was Jacob H. Schiff. About his banking genius I knew nothing; I knew him only as an admirable man of simple tastes whose time and abilities were always available for the betterment of his people. In addition to a great heart he had dignity, rectitude, integrity, and a strong conservative sense that new things must be entered into with caution. Whenever I came to him with some wild idea, he always took the trouble to analyze it and show

me the impracticality of it; and then he would give me the advice I needed.

After my husband's death, when I was trying to find a means to provide a livelihood for the family, Mrs. Schiff gave me my first encouragement. I was playing with the idea of preparing some lectures on English literature, and when Mrs. Schiff learned of this she offered to provide me with a weekly audience of several hundred women at her house. This series proved quite a success, and it got me through the first hard months of widowhood. Then, when I decided to establish a school for girls, the Schiffs listened sympathetically to my plans. Whenever my visions became a little too grandiose, Mr. Schiff would deflate them, and set me back on the path of hard reality. Thanks to this treatment, I was kept from making mistakes. When the school became a reality Mr. Schiff sent me a check for ten thousand dollars to help maintain it. Fortunately, thanks to his good advice, I had established so soundly that I did not really need his financial aid, and so I sent his check back to him with the utmost gratitude, feeling that he had already given me more help than the money represented. It was Mr. Schiff's way of assuring that one helped one's self.

My friendship with the Schiffs began through Mr. Schiff's interest in the scholarship of my husband. When Dr. Kohut arrived in New York for the first time, he still had the last volumes to finish

of his lifetime work, the *Aruch Completum*. Recognizing the value of this work, Mr. Schiff offered to contribute to the financing of its printing. From that point he became more and more interested in our family and became our willing adviser on many matters.

Later, when George grew up and became an authority on Jewish lore, he advised Mr. Schiff on the acquisition of various Jewish manuscripts and rare books. Mr. Schiff purchased these not for a personal collection, but so that he might donate them to the libraries of the Jewish Theological Seminary and other institutions of learning. Sometimes he acceded readily to George's suggestions, and sometimes he stubbornly opposed them, always giving a reason, such as the fact that a certain item was not of sufficiently general value to merit the high price its owner was asking.

Because Mr. Schiff was such a benefactor and patron of Jewish learning, many writers were anxious to dedicate published works to him, but Mr. Schiff always discouraged such manifestations. He made an exception once for a book written by George, because the subject of it particularly appealed to him, and in accepting its dedication he wrote, "I am breaking a lifelong rule which does not permit me to allow my vanity to be flattered while I am among the living."

For twenty-six years I was an annual summer guest of the Schiffs at their seashore home in New

Jersey, traveling with Mr. Schiff on the so-called "bankers' boat" to Seabright. I always occupied the same room, which Mrs. Schiff had had done especially for me in lavender. They were an extremely devoted couple. As a great banker Mr. Schiff at his office was a remote and legendary figure. At home he was the epitome of simplicity. He was somewhat hard of hearing, and the usual thing was said of him that is said of most men who are hard of hearing—that they hear the things they want to hear.

However, they used to tell an amusing tale of a dinner which was given in honor of Oscar S. Straus, who had been Secretary of Commerce and Labor. At this dinner, ex-President Theodore Roosevelt spoke. He said that when he became President he decided that he must have an important American Jew as a member of his cabinet, and Mr. Straus was the inevitable choice. The next speaker was Mr. Schiff. Apparently, he hadn't heard a word that T.R. had said. Mr. Schiff said that when T.R. became president he told Mr. Schiff he wanted a member of the Jewish faith in his cabinet, and he asked Mr. Schiff to suggest someone. "So I suggested Mr. Straus," said Mr. Schiff. There was an uproar of laughter at this, and none laughed more heartily than Mr. Roosevelt.

XIII

FROM COUNCIL TO WORLD CONGRESS

A PART from home and family, probably my most pleasant association of memory is my work in that splendid organization, the National Council of Jewish Women. Organizations are many and one gets quite used to them, but in this case the pull of nostalgia is especially strong. At the time the Council was founded, participation by women in public life was still a new thing, and there was an excitement, a heady sense of independence, a thrill, a feeling that one was taking part in the best kind of revolution, even if it involved nothing more at the moment than parliamentary debates about hot soup and recreation for school children.

I had done some public speaking in New York for the Women's Health Protective Association and at the Congress of Women at the World's Fair, and it was perhaps because of this experience that I was invited to join the National Council when it was formed. But at the time this invitation was extended my husband's critical illness had begun, and I had no interest outside of the sick-room.

After my husband's death I went to San Francisco, shattered in spirit, to stay with my sister Esther, who did her best to bring me peace. While I was in San Francisco, a telegram arrived from the National Council, asking me to accept the presidency of its New York Section. In the condition I was in, Esther thought it best to withhold the telegram from me until I had more strength. At the same time she wired back an acceptance from me—an act for which I was ever grateful. It was not until the end of my stay, when I was re-charged with courage and full of the desire to live and partake of life, that my sister broke the news to me that a public career awaited me in New York.

It was the best thing that could have happened to me. In New York I met the members of the local council, among them many notable Jewish women who had already made distinguished names for themselves in various fields. Such women as Mrs. Frederick Nathan, president of the Consumers' League; Minnie D. Louis, who founded the Hebrew Technical School for Girls; Julia Richman, the great educator, for whom a girls' high school in New York was later named; Esther Ruskay, a splendid poet; Sarah Lyons, Minnie Isaacs, Hannah B. Einstein, and many others. I felt honored at being the president of a Council with such members, and worried that I might not be equal to it.

As it turned out, the Council represented a bringing together of many diverse elements, some of which by their nature were not naturally harmonious. Some members represented the old Sephardic aristocracy of pre-Revolutionary days which had a tendency to be rather condescending toward the representatives of later migrations. Some represented the well-to-do German Jewish families, who smarted a bit under Sephardic condescension and were condescending in their turn toward the later arrivals from Russia and Poland. And then there were the women of Russian-Polish origin, who disregarded all social condescensions and were militant in the attitude that they were all Jewesses alike and had like work to do. There were, too, those who were fiercely Orthodox, those opposing Orthodoxy with an intense Reform; and those who were interested not at all in religious factionalism, but primarily in social welfare work.

With so many rocks and shoals in our course, skillful navigation was necessary. At the very first meeting at which I presided I took pains to see that the business of the day was held strictly to the essentials. Debates and polemics threatened at first. But I used every device of the gavel, the rule, even the steamroller, to keep the meeting going on its appointed path without mishap. In the end I succeeded; no one was scratched; no bones were broken; no feelings were hurt; and the members themselves were delighted that they had found

themselves able to work together so harmoniously (something they continued to do). When the meeting was over there was a rush to congratulate me on my masterfulness. Actually, with the strain over, I, the masterful one, was on the point of swooning, and in surrounding me with congratulations the members were really keeping me on my feet, reviving me without knowing it. Oh, strength! What a delusion!

At any rate, my introduction to the Council work was a good one. We all continued to work harmoniously and well. The work that the Council had cut out for itself, in all its branches, was much needed. It established Americanization courses for immigrants, recreation rooms for children, work rooms in which people learned new trades, many cultural activities, and in particular the various Councils in their communities interested themselves in municipal health problems, playgrounds for children, milk stations, and general betterment. The Council acquired a national membership of six hundred thousand conscientious, public-spirited women devoted to their communities and cooperating fully with other public bodies. In the decades that followed it made a name for itself as an organization devoted on the highest plane to the Jews of each community and to that community in general.

When the First World War came the Council, with its one hundred fifty sections, served in war

work, participating in the various fund-raising campaigns of the Joint Distribution Committee. After the war there was much work to be done among the Jewish refugees from shattered communities, and the Council appointed me chairman of a Reconstruction Committee which was to go abroad, make a survey, and determine what aid was needed. Jacob H. Schiff, Louis Marshall, Felix Warburg and Herbert H. Lehman generously gave contributions adequate to cover the expenses of the unit. Mr. Lehman was then a newcomer in the field of overseas relief work. Later, after several terms as Governor of New York State, he undertook to organize and direct the greatest overseas relief project of World War Two—UNRRA. His work for the aid of his suffering fellow man will always be remembered.

At the meeting at which I stated the needs for our Reconstruction Committee, Mr. Lehman was the first to respond, offering a check for five thousand dollars. Mr. Schiff then said, "If this young man can do that much, we older men should certainly do better." And he, Mr. Marshall and Mr. Warburg promptly gave contributions of ten thousand dollars each. In less than half an hour, we had the entire funds for our budget.

We visited refugee centers in Antwerp, The Hague, Rotterdam, Vienna, Kattowitz, Budapest, Frankfurt and other places. These cities held many groups who had fled from war-shattered

homes and from the banditry and pillage that succeeded the war. Here were Jews who had fled from Petlurist massacres in the Ukraine, anti-Semitic ravages in Poland, and harassments elsewhere. It was a horribly cynical fact that many victims of war did not bestow their resentment upon the rulers, militarists, and politicians who made their war—they visited their anger instead upon those who were its worst victims, such as the Jews. I used to think that justice was a simple matter of stating the truth, of pointing out wrongs and righting them—and that men, when they heard the truth, would recognize it and act accordingly. But the mind, I was forced to admit, is still a Dark Continent—the darkest of all—and the true explorers and scientists of today are not those who explore and deal with material matter, but those who explore and light up the tortuous labyrinthine passages of the mind.

In districts of many cities in Germany, Austria, Belgium and Holland there were tented colonies and dingy barrack buildings packed with refugees who were being cared for by co-religionists who had not much to spare themselves. Twenty thousand refugees were living in tents at The Hague, and there were masses of them in Rotterdam. In Antwerp, Jewish members of the community rented a large plot of ground for the raising of vegetables for the refugees, who themselves planted and cultivated the patch. In the refugee

camps at Kattowitz were thousands who had fled from pogrom-torn Poland and were living huddled together in misery and despair, waiting for one knew not what. In Vienna, a city itself stricken and destitute, one woman, Frau Anita Muller, had undertaken and was carrying through a heroic task: she created institutions that took care of twenty-five thousand refugee Jews—institutions including canteens, a maternity hospital, day schools, nurseries, an orphan asylum, a clinic for ailing children, and trade schools for women and girls.

After a survey that included many conferences with the people doing the main work in helping these refugees, it was agreed that the best thing the Council of Jewish Women could do in this situation would be to send units of social workers whose job would be to heighten the morale of the weary by leading them into ways of self-help. That was the recommendation of the Reconstruction Committee, and in the autumn of 1920, we began sending units to Europe. They did necessary and valuable work at Rotterdam, The Hague, Amsterdam, Antwerp, Riga, Danzig, Libau, Warsaw. Trade workshops were opened, men were encouraged to do gardening, there were class instructions in various trades, in hygiene, in courses in English. There were group singing, plays, other entertainments which the refugees themselves were encouraged to organize—everything to help make

the time not only passable but useful and pleasurable.

On the docks of the Holland-America Line at Rotterdam there was a large barrack filled with emigrants waiting hopelessly for weeks and months for passage. It was not their fault that they were there. They had been sold steamship tickets in various parts of Europe on the assurance that passage to America was immediately available; and there was no passage. These people were in very depressed spirits. One of our units was invited in, and it did extraordinarily good work in alleviating the misery and heightening the morale of those who waited. The immigrants-to-be were given lessons in English and American history, talks on American customs and ways of life, so that a good many of them not only passed their time better, but were actually well prepared for America by the time they got there. It was inspiring to hear their group singing of "The Star Spangled Banner." And on July Fourth, the pageant that was staged by them at the Montefiore Home in Rotterdam was something to see. In the pageant were Uncle Sam, the traditional drum beaters and fife blowers of the American Revolution, Priscilla Alden, Betsy Ross, George Washington—all impersonated by emigrants who had learned of these historical characters only lately from our workers. Present on that day was the United States Commissioner of Immigration, J.

Kennedy Todd, and the sight of this tribute to the future land brought tears to his eyes.

I think with gratitude of the Council's field workers who gave themselves so whole-heartedly to the European program—among them Celia Strakosch, Elinor Sachs-Barr, Doris Maddow, Clara Greenhut, Margaret Paukner—all highly educated, specially equipped devotees to a worthy cause.

One of the immediate results of our work was that leading Jewish women members of various European communities followed our example in forming Councils of Jewish Women to aid their co-religionists. And a second later result was the meeting of all these groups, new and old, in a World Congress of Jewish Women, which convened in Vienna in May, 1923, and created a permanent international organization with affiliations of more than a million Jewish women. I had the honor of being elected its president.

We met in the Koenigliche Hofburg, the palace of the former Emperor of Austria. Delegates came from many countries, some from great distances. Our opening session was addressed by the President of the Austrian Republic, Dr. Michael Hainisch and by his eighty-three-year-old mother, who had long been renowned as a feminist leader in Europe. The Burgomaster of Vienna welcomed us, too, and so also did Vienna's Chief Rabbi, Dr. Chajes. It was thanks to the Congress, in fact,

that I got to know Dr. Chajes, who became such a devoted family friend.

The five days of the Congress are among my fondest memories. Some of the most attractive and distinguished Jewish women in the world were there, representing the women of their countries, and I made many fast friendships. From Germany there were Fraulein Bertha Pappenheim, who had organized the Deutscher Frauenbund; Nannie Margolies, Dr. Sophie Werner, professor at the University of Hamburg, and Paula Ollendorf. From Austria itself there was Frau Anita Muller, who had done such a prodigious job for the refugees in Vienna. From England there were the Honorable Lillian Montagu, daughter of Lord Swaythling, Mrs. Gertrude Spielman and Mrs. Eicholz, daughter of Britain's former Chief Rabbi. From France came Mme. Zadoc Kahn, wife of the Chief Rabbi of Paris. From the United States there were Mrs. Nathaniel Harris, Mrs. Estelle Sternberger, now a distinguished radio news commentator, and Mrs. Elinor Sachs-Barr. And there was Vienna's Erna Patek, who shared the duties of official interpreter with Paula Ollendorf, and many, many others. Some of these have passed away, and some who are still among the living are still my friends. Only recently, for example, I have exchanged Congress memories with Lillian Montagu and Erna Patek.

November 21, 1935 was the Fiftieth Anniver-

sary of the New York Section of the Council, and of my assuming the presidency of it. To celebrate it, there was a Golden Jubilee Tribute dinner at the Hotel Commodore. I was the guest of honor, and I must cast aside modesty and say I enjoyed it thoroughly. There were nine hundred guests and many distinguished speakers. Fannie Hurst presided. I remember at one point becoming lost in some preoccupations while a speech was going on. Suddenly there was applause, and I came to with a start and joined in, applauding as heartily as the rest. Mrs. August Belmont, who sat next to me, whispered, "Listen, dear, that applause is for you." So I stopped. Then the next speaker, Felix M. Warburg, presented me with a check for fifty thousand dollars which I was to devote to any causes I liked. It was nice to get the check, and nicer to get rid of it as fast as possible. In any case, it was one of the most pleasant evenings of my life.

XIV

TITLES AND TITLES

I DON'T remember the titles of all the offices I have held in various organizations and committees. But certain titles do stand out, and the ones I remember most are the least official. For example, Mother Kohut and Grandma Kohut.

I am Mother Kohut to Lady Charles Marston, whose husband was financially responsible for the Tutankhamen excavations in Egypt, and to her sister Adrienne Battey of Atlanta, Georgia. And to Ruth Horn, whose husband was the physician at Camp Kohut; he died in action in France on the last day of the First World War.

Besides being grandmother to the new generation of the Kohut family, I am Grandma Kohut to little Martha McGee. I am also Grandma Kohut to the elevator men and doormen of the apartment house where I have lived all these years of my illness.

I am Mother Kohut to the Torreys of New Haven and their children.

My most recent honor is the naming of a doll for me—called "Rebekah" by its owner—little Mary Bernstein.

And then there are such lovely things as trees and groves. In the Louis D. Brandeis Forest in Palestine there is a Rebekah Kohut Grove—planted by the Mizrachi Women of America.

In another part of Palestine there is a Mother's Day Tree—planted "in honor of a Jewish mother in Israel, Rebekah Kohut," by my friend, Erna Patek.

There is a beautiful scroll here from the Jewish Institute of Religion conferring upon me the title of "Doctor of Hebrew Letters."

There is a small chapter of Hadassah somewhere in the Bronx which is named for me.

I have had all kinds of resounding titles such as president, chairman, member of the executive committee, vice-president in charge of the president, and so forth, but I am most content with the tree, the doll, the Hadassah chapter, the doctorate of Hebrew letters, and the Mother Kohut and Grandma Kohut.

XV

HISTORY VIA HOUSES

I FIRST saw the light in Kaschau, Hungary, but I do not remember my home there, as I was brought to America as a little child. The first home I do remember was in Richmond, Virginia, at Marshall and First Streets; we went there in 1869 and lived there seven years.

Richmond, the city of southern tradition, hills and magnolia, has always been a source of nostalgia for us. My father went there as the new rabbi of the Beth Ahabah Congregation. Since it had been the tradition in his family for seven generations that the sons be both rabbis and physicians, my father carried on this double tradition in Richmond, too. As soon as he arrived he enrolled as a student at the Virginia Medical College. Each morning this father of six children could be seen going off to school with his children, the father with his textbooks and the children with theirs—an astonishing sight for many Richmonders.

We loved our home and our street. Further down Marshall Street was the fine old home of John Marshall, first Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court. Across the street from us

resided Bishop, later Cardinal, James Gibbons. Particularly nostalgic to me is the memory of a walnut tree on Marshall Street that I and my brother Felix used to climb.

There was no free public school system in Richmond until 1871. In that year, when the new system was instituted, my father's congregation offered the classroom of its building rent free to the city, and the offer was accepted. My father's synagogue was the locale of the first free public school in Richmond.

In our first year in Richmond my mother died and was buried in the cemetery on Shockoe Hill. As children we used to spend a good deal of time at her grave, always bringing flowers and even playthings there, in the desire to be near her; and our happiness in that regard brought us reproaches from some of our friends and neighbors, as if what we were doing was unseemly.

My father placed each of his six children in charge of the other. What with his congregational duties, his medical studies and his motherless children, he had a very difficult time. He married again. Lavinia Iseman, our new mother, was a native Virginian, the daughter of a wealthy tobacco planter who had become impoverished by the late war. She hated the victorious North, and did her mightiest to instill her sentiments in us. She was forever describing her own glamorous girlhood and the splendors of ante-bellum Virginia

before the Yankees came and ruined everything.

Her father's plantation was near Waller's Tavern, at the crossroads between Spottsylvania Court House and Fredericksburg. He not only managed his plantation, with many of his former slaves as employees, but he was also the postmaster and general storekeeper at Spottsylvania Court House. We children spent our summers at Waller's Tavern. We knew little about war, but the inhabitants were always pointing out the scenes of notable battles, because it was the vicinity of the great engagements of Chancellorsville, Spottsylvania Court House, The Wilderness—those historic fights between Confederate armies headed by Lee and Stonewall Jackson and Union armies headed by Hooker and Sedgwick. Nearby was the Rapahannock River, in which hundreds of Confederate and Union cavalymen lost their lives while fording the flooded stream in an engagement below Fredericksburg. It was all strange to us. What we were most interested in as children was not the war, but the picking of wonderful flowers and the eating of berries. My sisters and I returned forty-five years later to Waller's Tavern, and, in addition to the transformations of time, viewed the usual differences of proportions between our memories and the remaining actualities. The buildings were still standing, but no longer had the vastness of our early memories; they seemed shrunken in size.

In our Richmond home I first saw a pattern that was repeated in all our subsequent homes—the pattern of a great many visitors. My father received not only his congregants but many Christian clergymen, to whom he gave lessons in Hebrew; many were writers, journalists and members of various welfare committees. My father was very much the communal man, and he liked to discuss civic problems and to do work for their betterment. In all our homes we got quite used to people trooping in and out; a quiet day when there were no visitors was something out of the ordinary.

A scholar usually knows how to shield himself from too many visitors. My father, in addition to being rabbi and physician, was a scholar, but he loved people too much to be able to deny himself to them for the sake of his work. As a result, his works of scholarship suffered, and he left behind only unachieved fragments of scholarly projects—three-quarters of a revised American Bible, monographs on medicine, and many brilliant theological studies that were never incorporated and organized into an impressive whole.

We were fast becoming Virginians in spirit, accent and all, and acquiring the habit of looking backward to days of vanished glory and opulence that we had never had, when my father pulled up stakes and moved us all to San Francisco, where a congregation had invited him to its pulpit. That was in 1875. It took us ten days to cross the conti-

nent in a train, and the journey was full of excitement, especially for us children, who were full of the lore of the savage Indians and expected the train to be attacked by whooping tribes any minute. Indian attacks were still very much in the air—indeed, the historic Custer massacre of the Little Big Horn took place the following year.

Richmond, the city of grace, nostalgia and bitterness, was succeeded by San Francisco, that heady town where everyone looked forward and where no one had time or inclination for the past and for the consoling and humoring of those who had fallen by the wayside. It was breezy, bustling, cosmopolitan, both crude and sophisticated, and everyone seemed to be on the drive to get somewhere, so to speak. We had wooden sidewalks and splendid art galleries; we already had the tradition of the Native Son and the '49 rush, and along with it a steady influx of new immigrants who made California tradition in practically the first two minutes of their stay. We loved California and San Francisco. It, too, like Richmond was a hilly town, but with great vistas, the spirit of enterprise and opportunity, and an invigoration that captivated and possessed us all.

Our little house on Larkin Street soon became a gathering place for all kinds of interesting local characters, for my father had plunged immediately into the life of the community and quickly became part of it. He wrote for San Francisco

newspapers, worked for prison reform, and, as in Richmond, formed a Hebrew study group for Christian clergymen.

To our home came such people as John Swett, superintendent of San Francisco public schools; the painter Tobey E. Rosenthal; the fabulous Adolph Sutro of Sutro's Gardens and the Cliff House; the philanthropist Michael Reese who later left a large sum for the construction of the Michael Reese Hospital in Chicago. Isaac M. Wise, the militant apostle of Jewish Reform, was frequently our guest whenever he came to San Francisco in behalf of his cause. The interesting thing about this was that Dr. Wise and my father were in opposite camps, yet that did not militate against their being warm and considerate friends. They argued aplenty, of course, but with great personal respect for each other; and they reveled in each others' personalities. My father was particularly touched by the attention Dr. Wise paid to us children, his playing of games with us and telling us endless stories. We were captivated by him and adored him. He was Friday Night to us. Friday Night in our home was the time reserved for weekly festivities, for singing, story telling and general gaiety. Well, whenever Dr. Wise appeared in our midst, no matter what time of the week it was, it was Friday Night for us. All during his life, apparently, he was an event for a great many people of all ages.

Among San Franciscans who frequented our home we children particularly enjoyed the visits of Julius Kahn, later one of the most eminent members of the United States Congress, but at that time the neighborhood baker's son. He became an intimate friend of my brother, Felix. Julius Kahn's first ambition was to be an actor, and he worked at it for several years. Certainly, his theatrical training was of help to him in his later public speaking, for he was one of the most effective speakers on the floor of Congress. After his death his beloved wife, Florence Kahn, succeeded to his seat in Congress and was regularly re-elected by the constituency until the incapacities of age forced her retirement from active life. I was saddened recently to read of her death at the age of eighty-four.

Speaking of Julius Kahn's apprenticeship in the theater reminds me of another San Franciscan of the theater, David Belasco, whose father, too, was a familiar figure in the house on Larkin Street. Young David was just then beginning his career in San Francisco as a member of the Baldwin Theater Stock Company. That career led eventually to New York and to a fabulous legend of Belasco as the wizard of stage producers. Our taste for theatrical production is of a different order now, but I can remember a time when "Belasco realism" was considered the last word in the mounting of a play. If he presented a scene on a

beach, he provided real sand, they said. The books on the shelves were not mere bindings; they could really be read. If the scene were an underworld dive and the characters were eating, the food would not be from the Ritz, but would be appropriately bad, so that the actors might really "live" their roles. Or so people said. I, myself, having known a few actors and their spirit, think it highly apocryphal. In any case, "the Belasco realism" was one primarily of stage setting rather than of subject matter.

Just as we had been very Richmond-y, we were now very Californian—except for my new mother, who was always Richmond to the core and excoriated the California rain, the California fog, and the California sunshine. True to the magnolias of her native state, she echoed the caustic anti-Californian remark that the Golden State was "nothing but a lot of geraniums." But we children loved it all.

My brother Felix, feeling that rabbis were unappreciated in America, informed my father that he would not carry on the family tradition by becoming a rabbi—the first break in eight generations. He went to the University of California, and then to medical school. As for myself, I went through primary school, high school, normal school in a series of varied moods, now enthusiastic, now disturbed—and these experiences are memorable to me now mostly because of the won-

derful influence of certain teachers—Caroline Lora Hunt, Mary Kincaid, Fidelia Jewett. Also memorable were my experiences in working for the Fruit and Flower Mission and for the Perry Street Kindergarten, when I received much guidance and inspiration from the two Smith sisters conducting it—Norah and Kate.

By the time I entered the University of California, which had lately become co-educational, I felt that San Francisco was to be my home for life. True, the family was beginning to break up. Felix, finishing medical school, became ship's physician of the *Colima*, making the Pacific Mail run between San Francisco and Panama. And my older sister, Esther, was married.

The constant voyages to Panama got Felix interested in the Canal, the building of which was then a French enterprise under the direction of the famous engineer De Lesseps. It was a pest-hole of malaria, yellow fever, and other dread diseases, and many thousands of workers died during the construction which De Lesseps later abandoned. These epidemics were not conquered until the Americans came in and took the job, with General Gorgas in charge of the medical work. But at the time that Panama was Felix's port of call, the bad health conditions there made him feel that that was the place he wanted to work.

Felix was not at all interested in becoming a conventionally successful medical practitioner

with a comfortable practice among the rich. The Canal's problems appealed mightily to him, and after several talks with De Lesseps, he resigned from the Pacific Mail run and became resident surgeon of the Panama Canal. In this post he was instrumental in having the first general hospital built there. Years later he died of a tropical liver complaint contracted during his service at the Canal.

As I said, I regarded San Francisco as my permanent abode. But developments changed all that. There was a cut-rate war among rival railway systems, and as a result people could make excursion trips to the East for very little. My father decided to take advantage of it by spending his vacation in the East among old friends and associates. Since vacations were in order, it was decided that I, too, take a vacation trip, as I had been in ill health for several months. But my prescribed trip was a sea voyage—down to Panama on the *Colima* to visit Felix, overland across the Isthmus, then by Atlantic vessel to New York, and down to Richmond to revisit old childhood scenes.

My father left San Francisco before I did. By the time I reached Panama, Felix had news for me. My father had been offered a pulpit in Baltimore and had accepted. Baltimore was a particularly attractive prospect for him. It was the first place he had lived in the United States, as the guest of his dearest comrade of student days—

Rabbi Benjamin Szold. Dr. Szold was still there and flourishing, and it would be pleasant to be always near his old friend. My father had a soft spot for Baltimore, anyway. And his old Marshall Street neighbor in Richmond, Bishop Gibbons, was now Cardinal in Baltimore.

This change was news, indeed—an eminent goodbye to previously permanent San Francisco. But my father's letter also brought other news. In New York he had met a great Hungarian rabbi, Dr. Alexander Kohut, lately transplanted to the United States with his family. My father had known of him by reputation for years, and upon their meeting they had become intimate and inseparable friends. My father would be on his return voyage to San Francisco by the time I reached New York. He hoped that during my stay there I would see Dr. Kohut and his lovely children; he had eight of them (his wife had died shortly after the family's arrival in America the year before).

What happened in New York I have stated fully in my autobiography, *My Portion*. Suffice to say here that I fell in love with Dr. Kohut and all his children. After a week's acquaintance I remarked to the New York cousin with whom I was staying that Alexander Kohut was the only kind of man who could have an appeal for me. She remarked, "Yes, but he has eight children." To

which I replied, "It wouldn't make any difference to me if he had eighty."

He told me the next week that ever since he had met me he had been thinking of asking me to be his wife, and now he was asking it. I told him that ever since I had met him I had been thinking the same thing, but I would have to consult my family.

I wired the news to San Francisco and was told sharply to come home at once. I received a whole series of wires from various indignant family members telling me to come to my senses and not to see Dr. Kohut any more. Only Felix wired his approval and congratulations, which were followed later by a letter, in which he brushed aside all the differences in age and the eight children and said he felt I could not be happy in marriage with an ordinary man who had only material blessings to offer, and that it would be better for me to have the problems that went with a first-rate man than the absence of them with a lesser one.

I seem to be telling my whole life story all over again in the process of describing the homes and houses I have lived in. I did not see Dr. Kohut again before I left New York. After a short stay in Richmond I went to Baltimore, to find and prepare a home for my family. During this time I lived with the Szolds, whose home was very much like our own, in the comings and goings and

the hospitality to all. That was the beginning of my warm friendship with Henrietta Szold.

I finally found a house on McCullough Street and got it completely ready, even to the extent of having a hot meal ready on the table when my family arrived. When the family realized how determined I was in the matter of Alexander Kohut, they finally gave in and we were formally engaged, though not to marry for many months. I put in the time studying German while my fiance in New York studied English. My father was happy in his duties as rabbi of the First Baltimore Hebrew Congregation, and the McCullough Street house soon became a center and meeting place, just as all our other houses had been.

Many students of Johns Hopkins University used to visit us, and we had such friends as Dr. Gilman, President of Johns Hopkins, and Mary Wilson, who studied Hebrew with my father. And it was particularly interesting to my father to be able to continue his friendship of fourteen years' standing with Cardinal Gibbons.

The Cardinal was a completely enlightened man whose heart was always on the side of the under-privileged. Having long been a Catholic dignitary in the Protestant South, where Catholics were in a very small minority and often derided and discriminated against, he understood the general problems of minorities, sympathized with them and aided them. Today's generation has

heard very little, I'm sure, about the old-time Knights of Labor. They were forerunners and predecessors of the American Federation of Labor, and their aims were mild indeed—simply a living wage and better working conditions in a time when small wages, long hours and miserable working conditions were more or less the rule. For such demands the Knights of Labor were branded a menace to civilization, and even branded so by many clergymen. But not by Cardinal Gibbons. He recognized the legitimacy of their demands and supported their aims—to the horror, be it said, of some clericals. Cardinal Gibbons was also the main inspiration behind the founding of what is considered the best institution of Catholic learning in the United States—The Catholic University at Washington.

Alexander Kohut and I were married in McCullough Street in 1887, with Dr. Szold performing the marriage ceremony. My next home was in New York, and it had been purchased by Dr. Kohut because of a romance he had read—a book by Henry Harland called *The Yoke of the Torah*. The author had his heroine living at a house at 39 Beekman Place, overlooking the East River. It was the first book Dr. Kohut had read in English, and he not only loved it, but loved its locale; he used to take a walk in that direction every day and look at the house. One day he saw a

"For Sale" sign affixed to it, and so he promptly put all his savings into buying the house.

The house still stands, and only the other day I saw an advertisement in the *Times* in which it was again offered for sale. It was large and commodious, with a spacious living room, plenty of rooms for the children, and a fine library and study for my husband. What busy times! I ran the house, looked after the children, helped my husband with his correspondence, entertained the congregants of his synagogue, did my best to shield him from callers who had no real claim on his time. Every minute he could spare from his rabbinical duties, he needed for work on his great task of scholarship, the *Aruch Completum*, on which he had already spent more than twenty years. So I lived in a constant fever of activity and I loved it.

Beekman Place was a joy. Those two charming little streets above the East River seemed cut off from the bustle of New York, and there were ever so many pleasant neighbors in the adjoining houses—mostly musicians, writers, editors, and several judges. At the back of the house was the entrancing view of the river with Blackwell's Island and all the traffic of barges, tugs and passenger boats plying to and from the Sound. It was always fascinating.

The house was filled not only with family, but with friends. There were always visitors galore.

Jacob H. Schiff came frequently to pay his respects to a great rabbi and discuss plans for publishing his works of scholarship. Michael Heilprin, an editor of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and Michael Rodkinson, translator of the Talmud into English, loved to have long and learned palavers with the scholar from Hungary. Naphtali Herz Imber, the gifted Hebrew poet, had the habit of ringing the doorbell soon after he had dashed off a new poem and of demanding an immediate audience. Isaac M. Wise, who was my husband's public opponent in the Conservative-Reform controversy, always left his theological differences at the front door with his coat and gave us the pleasure of his personal friendship. Judge Samuel Greenbaum, Daniel P. Hays and Dr. Henry M. Leipziger formed a particularly delightful trio of visitors. The first two made distinguished legal history in New York, and Dr. Leipziger must always be honored in memory as the man who worked to establish the public night schools for adults in New York and who created the free lecture courses in public schools which have always been such a fine feature of our city life. Dr. Leipziger helped my husband with his English, and in later years, when I was planning my school for girls, I was the beneficiary of his invaluable advice.

We were always glad to see Philip Cowen, editor of the *American Hebrew*, and California days

were made vivid again by the presence of Benjamin F. Peixotto, later United States Minister to Rumania. His niece, Jessica Peixotto, who became professor of psychology at the University of California, was my schoolmate in San Francisco.

From the theatrical world there was Clara Lipman, actress and playwright. We saw a good deal at Beekman Place of such Christian clergymen as Dr. Charles Eaton, Dr. S. S. MacArthur and Dr. Robert Collyer of Calvary Baptist Church; and a particularly warm friend was Dr. William Hayes Ward, the liberal magazine editor who ran the famous old *Independent*.

The children were a joy, in their wide-eyed fascination with everything American, and it was wonderful to watch how each day they absorbed more and more of the New World and became a part of it. Little George, then thirteen, was already his father's shadow, ever by his side, always eager to help him in whatever way he could. At first he would never venture very far away from his father; then he grew exploratory, little by little, and reached out for more of New York. He was so impressed with the number of visitors we had that he got the notion somehow that all New York was making its way to his father. This inspired a strange enterprise in him—a decision to become a volunteer guide and traffic director. One day he stationed himself at the bottom of the

steps of the Third Avenue elevated station and asked descending people whether they were looking for Dr. Kohut's house, to which he would show them the way. We had to put a stop to this, because some very odd visitors arrived in this manner. Fortunately, George soon found some other interests, and devoted himself to playing Indians, policemen, cowboys and other American roles with the neighbors' children.

It was at Beekman Place, on May 14, 1889, that my husband finished his life's work, the *Aruch Completum*. This encyclopedic talmudic dictionary, published finally in eight volumes containing four thousand double-columned pages, was acclaimed by leading scholars of Europe and America as "a monument of science." It has received abounding praise from such renowned scholars as Ernest Renan, Friedrich Muller, Franz Delitzsch, Hans Barth, Martin Buber, Kautzsch and Ascoli.

It was a year of joy, and the next year was one of great sorrow. My brother Felix was stricken by his tropical complaint, and came home to Baltimore to die. He was attended by the great Dr. Osler (later Sir William Osler), the then medical genius of Johns Hopkins; but all efforts to help Felix failed. And in that same year my father, returning from a European trip aboard the steamship *Muenchen*, died at sea.

He had gone to Europe to visit his brothers and sisters, whom he had not seen in many years. He made the trip overseas in the company of two Catholic priests of Baltimore, both of whom had studied Hebrew with him. Three days out from Baltimore a Russian Jewish passenger in the steerage died. Navigation rules at that time required burial at sea for passengers dying aboard ship. My father pleaded with the captain that the passenger's body be saved for his family, which was awaiting him at Bremen. But his pleas were in vain.

My father and his priest friends went their separate ways after arriving in Europe, the priests to Rome and my father to Vienna. But they had a rendezvous three months later to return together on the same ship.

On the return voyage, three days out from Bremen, my father died suddenly of Bright's disease. The priests pleaded vainly with the captain that his body be saved for his family. So my father was buried at sea in the American flag. From his own prayer book the priests read the Hebrew burial service over his body.

About this time the mortgage on Beekman Place became too much for us, and so we said goodbye to the East River and moved to a house on East Seventy-second Street. This house became

a place of sorrow, for it was there that my husband's illness began, and it was there that he died. When later I established the Kohut School for Girls on West Fifty-eighth Street, we moved into a house several doors away. And when George founded the Kohut School for Boys at Riverdale, that became my home for several years.

Since then I have lived in various apartment houses and have no particular sentiment about them, for one apartment is much like another. Having made so many European trips—twenty-six Atlantic voyages—I used to like ships as temporary homes; for a decade the one place I used to feel most at home was Marienbad, where George and I went every year for a month's vacation with his beloved scholars.

Now I am in an apartment house at Park Avenue and Ninety-second Street—my last home. Not having left my room for six years, I see nothing, not only of Park Avenue, but of the city and the world, which is brought to me by newspapers, radio, family and visitors. My room is filled with the memories of two continents, with the shades of thousands of people passing in procession from childhood to old age, with history and with characters great and small, sad and lively, and with the hand of tenderness passing over it all. It is a very full room when I am alone there. And I still, old as I am, entertain childhood fantasies

that something exciting and wonderful is about to happen. The telephone rings. Perhaps it is the Prophet Elijah. It isn't. But I am very glad for the call, whoever it is.

XVI

MEMORIES OUT OF SEASON

WHEN I began making notes for these pages, I had difficulty in remembering things, and especially in remembering them in sequence. I still have the same difficulty, and fear I have left out many things. I have a distinct feeling that I am probably missing up on matters and persons that have been of vital concern to me.

For example, here I have gone this far and I have not even mentioned all I owe to Dr. Hirsch Perez Chajes, the one-time Chief Rabbi of Vienna. The meeting with him was an event in my life, and ever after, until the day of his death, he became and remained a close family friend, and he was never far from our thoughts.

I first saw him in The Hague after the First World War, when I went abroad for the Council of Jewish Women's Reconstruction Committee. He was doing magnificent work for the aid of starving Austrian Jewish children, bringing trainloads of them to Holland, where co-religionists took them in, fed and housed them, and restored them to life and health. He had the reputation of

a hard-working saint—one who devotes himself not simply to meditation and prayer but to a relentless fourteen-hour-a-day working schedule.

From our first meeting he was an inspiration and guide to all of us in the Council, and our work was helped considerably by his example and by the guidance he gave us. This was the beginning of a splendid friendship. My son George, when he got to know Dr. Chajes, adored him, and the two men became like brothers. In addition to being a great spiritual leader and a fine administrator he was a distinguished scholar—something which always appealed mightily to George.

We got into the habit of meeting Dr. Chajes each year for a joint holiday at Marienbad along with a group of other scholars—what George called “the annual clambake of learning.” Toward the end of his life (he died in 1927) Dr. Chajes came to America as our guest. New York fascinated him. He had worked very hard for a good many years, and now he had the time and the yearning for recreation. He confided to us, for example, that he had never seen a motion picture. There had always been plenty of motion picture theaters in Vienna, but a Chief Rabbi had so much to do, and besides, if he were seen entering or leaving a film theater, some one might say the Chief Rabbi was not a serious person—a veritable playboy, in fact. Here in America, however, he felt safe in venturing into one of these temples of the

film art without raising the possibilities of gossip, criticism, scandal.

That was still in the days of the silent pictures. We didn't think at the time that silent pictures would soon be outmoded and relegated to history. We thought they were quite advanced indeed, and we took Dr. Chajes to see some of the wonderful epics that Hollywood was producing, by De Mille and others. Dr. Chajes shuddered. If this were the movies, possibly he had been very wise in shunning them up to now. But then we took him to a little film theater on Sixth Avenue that was regularly showing early Chaplins. That was different. Dr. Chajes was entranced. For a time Dr. Chajes went every day to the Sixth Avenue film theater; he couldn't get enough of the comic-pathetic little man with the cane and the big feet.

I remember that one of the greatest of modern scholars, Dr. Solomon Schechter, had a consuming passion for detective stories. He was the pride of Cambridge University and later he came to the United States to head the Jewish Theological Seminary. He carried the learning of many ages and cultures in his head, but he read detective stories as fast as they were printed, and was always ahead of their publishers. One day in London he asked George to scour up some new ones for him. George came back with practically a bale of them, but Dr. Schechter had already read every one. He amused himself by recounting their plots one after

the other—three minutes to a plot—and then tossing them into the basket. Poor George, who was in great awe of Schechter, was flabbergasted and agape over the scholar's absorption in murder and sudden death. But later George, too, became an addict.

One of our most enjoyable indulgences consisted in playing host to scholars from Europe. Almost every winter for a decade, and more, we invited some distinguished scholar to New York for the season and reserved a hotel suite for his use, usually at the Hotel Majestic on Central Park West, which was near our own apartment. The scholars always enjoyed themselves thoroughly. They could wander about the town and make friends, and when they wanted company they could always drop in on us for breakfast, lunch, dinner, tea and what not. Usually the visit was accompanied by a series of lectures at the Jewish Institute of Religion, of which George was a trustee. It was an honor to entertain these scholars, and it was also great fun. As I have said before, there is no better company.

One of our links with the scholars of Europe was Dr. Emil Damask of Vienna. He was legal representative and executive secretary for Europe of the Kohut Foundation. It was through him that arrangements were usually made for Kohut scholarships at the Jewish Institute of Religion, and he represented George in the obtaining of manu-

scripts and of works to be chosen for publication by the various European branches of the Kohut Foundation. Dr. Damask was frequently with us during our European trips and was an engaging and helpful companion. He came to America after the Hitler terror began, found a post at the New York Public Library, and established a little home for himself on Long Island. He was just becoming acclimated to America when he died on a Long Island train of a heart attack.

When I speak of having failed to remember in sequence or in order of importance, this does not necessarily apply to people only. For example, what the storms in San Francisco meant to me. Actually I loved being caught in the rain and it was my surest method for getting rid of a hat I had worn too long.

Then there was the time when I first saw the ancient headstones in the little Jewish cemetery in Prague. One moment I was a tourist looking at a landmark, and the next moment I was filled with pride and reverence. Sixty years away from it I am thrilled again.

Never, in retrospect, did geese sound so musical as when they cackled at Kecskemet, my husband's birthplace in Hungary, during my first view of it.

I have visited many great universities and have viewed them with admiration and awe, but no fountainhead of learning has moved me more than the little old Educational Alliance on the East

Side of New York, the first time I saw newly arrived immigrants taking night courses in English there. It is one of my satisfactions that I, too, undertook to teach English to immigrants at the Alliance.

Out of the myriads of faces from the past comes one that still pulls at the heart—the face of a woman sitting in the doorway of the Montefiore House in Rotterdam one day in 1919—a Jewish refugee from Poland who had lost her reason, and who sat there with three tiny children tugging at her skirts.

I see the face of Dr. Gustav Gottheil, the beloved rabbi of Temple Emanu-El, as he advised a career of social service for me. It took very little persuasion, as it was the one thing I wanted to do.

Simultaneously I see two vanished great assembly halls—Mechanics Pavilion in San Francisco, where, as the representative of my class in Denman School, I shook the hand of General Grant—and Madison Square Garden in New York, where I spoke from the same platform with President Theodore Roosevelt. I felt quite grown up when meeting the General, and had a momentary relapse to the San Francisco schoolgirl when greeted by T.R.

San Francisco school days and generals make me see another face—that of the French general Boulanger, the fire-eating apostle of *la revanche* who might have become the dictator of France but

for the people's fear of another "man on horseback." He was the specter of impending disaster to many Frenchmen before they finally rejected him (after which he took his own life) but to us girls at the Denman School, where he came as a visitor, he was the most dashing, romantic figure. If it were up to schoolgirls only, no doubt a good many countries would have dictators. I am sure the schoolgirls of Russia think of Stalin as a most romantic tyrant.

We schoolgirls in San Francisco certainly saw a great many distinguished foreign visitors. The reason for it was easy to ascertain. Everybody wanted to see the capital of "the gold rush," the scene of the epic of the Forty-Niners. Perhaps they felt that there might still be a little gold lying around—enough to take home in a large trunk as a souvenir. And once they got there, the Native Sons and Daughters were anxious to show the foreigners not gold but culture—and inevitably, like it or not, they were steered to our schools and virtually commanded to take an eye-filling look at "the most glorious schoolchildren in God's Country." And to make a speech to them too, of course. In that way we met many international celebrities of the time. One whom I particularly remember was Ferdinand De Lesseps, the French engineer who was first to undertake the cutting of the Panama Canal. His visit is vivid in memory

to me because he later invited my brother Felix to become resident surgeon at the Canal.

They still stream to California, but now it is Hollywood the foreigners want to see—another kind of “gold rush.”

There comes to me a visual remembrance of the early World Zionist Congress at Basel which I attended. Everyone who attended came there with a dream, but it was not always the same dream as the others had, and the air was filled with contrary opinions, some vehemently expressed, and with doubts that such divergences could ever be ironed out and harmonized. Dr. Herzl was there, sad and weary, wondering at all this factionalism among his fellow dreamers of the Jewish State. Dr. Max Nordau was answering opponents left and right but was very careful not to denounce any of them as a genius (not since he had written that book in which he tried to prove that genius was a product of degeneracy). Israel Zangwill fluctuated between wit, melancholy, exasperation and passionate appeals for straight thinking by the delegates. Yet out of all this heat and divergence came the Zionist Organization which went to work on the dream, and persisted in it through the years until the Jewish Homeland became a reality.

The great figures of that Congress were not the ones who lived to see the dream through. Chaim Weizmann was there as a young delegate from

Russia, but I did not know him at the time and he did not emerge into a conspicuous position until later—and it was Weizmann who carried through subsequently in all the hard years and has lived to see the realization of the state of Israel.

XVII

THE QUALITY OF JEWISHNESS

I HAVE lived in a time of the greatest material progress, the greatest espousal of the sentiments of humane civilization, the most execrable hypocrisy, and the most terrible barbarism and cruelty in history. It has been a tragic era in which to be alive and particularly tragic in which to be a Jew. I wonder how many non-Jews could have stood the tests and trials to which masses of Jews have been subjected.

Understandably, many Jews have sought an easier lot through escape into anonymity, assimilation and so forth—and those escapes too have brought their own problems of uneasiness and unhappiness. There is a quality which Chaim Weizmann calls “Jewishness”—a full identification of a Jew with the Jews and the facing of whatever problems it entails with courage, a good heart, intelligence and pride. That self-identification does not simply mean mere acceptance—it also means something positive—a compassionate working for the betterment of the general Jewish lot. I am glad to say that I have had “Jewishness” to an abundant degree.

For one who was the daughter, wife and mother of rabbis, this might seem natural and inevitable. Yet as a young girl, sheltered in a home which was a citadel of the best in Judaism, I had many moments of anguish and self-doubt, and a desire to turn away from a path which seemed littered with so many difficulties that other people did not have to face.

Nearly seventy years ago, when I was a pupil at normal school in San Francisco, I mingled a great deal with Christians whom I admired greatly. They were happy people with none of the problems that I thought I had. I wanted to be like them. I had religious doubts and wanted to escape my destiny of Judaism, and I thought assimilation was the only way out for me, although I did not identify my leanings with the word "assimilation." I had these desires in spite of the fact that I lived at home in an atmosphere of Jewishness in which I could well take pride—with a father who was one of the noblest representatives of his people and a loving and understanding parent, with an affectionate and thoughtful mother, with brothers and sisters who were the finest of the fine.

If it could happen to me under such circumstances, how much more likely for other troubled ones who did not enjoy such benefits and protections.

As I came to understand it later, it was the re-

belliousness of adolescence, the beginning of a desire to sever family ties, no matter how fine the family, the drive towards independence and separate entity—something all adolescents go through, whatever their origin—the usual growing pains. In my case the adolescent revolt included a wish for severance from the Judaism of my parents and an escape into pleasanter, easier circles where one did not have to be constantly on trial, constantly at one's best—where one could be just what one's inclination dictated, without concern for the eyes and thoughts of others.

It was a Gentile who put me back on the path of Jewishness—Mary Kincaid, principal of the normal school I attended. I discussed with her what I could not discuss with my family. She convinced me that it was finer and better for me to work for my people, to be one of them completely, to realize and fulfill whatever was in me, than to escape comfortably into an ease which would be no ease, which would plague and nullify me. I knew the teachings of Judaism, I had the examples of the prophets, the great men and women of Israel, the examples of my family, but it was this Gentile, with her love for the Bible and her adoration for the people of our history, who imbued me with the value of my people and the privilege of serving them. I was both ashamed of my former weakness and proud of my new strength—and I have always been grateful to Mary Kincaid. It has

been a pride to me to be a Jewess—a pride and a responsibility, and I have never regretted the responsibility, which was the true impetus to any good development I have had.

There is no one all-inclusive explanation for anti-Semitism. It exists on many different levels and appeals to different passions, all of which have been pretty well explored. We are all too familiar with the idea of the scapegoat in time of trouble, and just as familiar with mob hostilities directed against weak minorities who are different. We know the animalistic anti-Semitism of the bully, with that fine frenzy of courage which inspires him when he can safely attack the defenseless. We know the anti-Semitism of envy. We know the anti-Semitism that is uneasy about the thinking intellectual and is an enemy of thought, and we also know the sterile intellectual anti-Semitism that resents the fecundity of Jewish thought. Jean-Paul Sartre, in his brilliant treatise, "Anti-Semite and Jew," has recently re-introduced us to the anti-Semitism of the mediocre, who builds up his ego by maintaining that he is always superior to the Jew, no matter how great the attainments of the Jew and no matter how small *his* attainments. It is the implacable, uncompromising aristocracy of the be-ers trying their hardest to look down with contempt upon the do-ers.

Most Jews sooner or later become familiar with all these manifestations. In my younger years I

thought anti-Semitism was a simple matter to cope with. When I heard wild statements attributing all kinds of evils to the Jews, I thought people had been misinformed, and that if the misinformation were corrected by the truth, people would realize the mistake and would think differently. It took me some time to realize that the misinformation was not only what certain people wanted to believe, insisted upon believing, but that something in their inner nature actually created or spread the lie as a bolster and justification for feelings they wanted to have. When I realized that, I knew that merely pointing out the lie was not enough; information alone could not cope with the vicious fantasies spun out by the emotions of virulence.

Groups of scientists went to work some time ago specifically on research into these matters. They have brought out of obscurity those patterns in the dark recesses of the mind that make for the outpourings of anti-Semitism. They have already published many valuable papers on the subject, but it is only a beginning.

M. Sartre says in his notable treatise that anti-Semitism is not a problem for the Jews; it is a problem for the Gentiles. For anti-Semitism, in his view, is wholly a product of the Gentile mind working upon itself, making up for its own disappointments, inadequacies, floutings by transforming them into hatred for another people who have their own disappointments, inadequacies and

floutings. He says, further, that where anti-Semitism becomes rampant, the emotions it arouses never stay fixed on the Jews but soon pass on to envelop and strike at other groups of the community. Speaking specifically of France, he says that if the Jew is not secure in France, no one else in France is secure; and the same applies to other communities and nations.

Since the Jews are the direct, the first, the chief sufferers from the passions engendered by anti-Semitism, it is a little difficult for them to accept, with the best will in the world, that this is purely a Gentile problem, however true that be. That is a pretty hard abstention. The Jews would not be human if they did not try to oppose anti-Semitism with all their spirit, and it is to their credit that they do. I have no patience with those apologetic Jews who fear that their co-religionists' protests against injustice will only make things worse, and will only irritate the anti-Semite more. If no one irritates the anti-Semite, he is always capable of irritating himself sufficiently. I remember Mr. Chamberlain after Munich cautioning his countrymen not to irritate Hitler. Alfred Duff Cooper, replying in disgust in the House of Commons, said it was naive of Mr. Chamberlain to assume that a lack of irritation from plain-spoken Englishmen would render Hitler a peaceful gentleman; he would still be able to froth at the mouth and send out irritated armies to overrun weak countries.

Which he did, to Mr. Chamberlain's apparent astonishment—an astonished statesman.

M. Sartre's treatise, which is addressed to the French, is couched in intellectual terms, appeals to thinking Frenchmen and Frenchwomen, and its examples are drawn mostly from the patterns of social and intellectual anti-Semitism as seen in France—not the more violently rampant kind seen further to the East. It was written in 1944, when the world was already aware generally of the horrors perpetrated by the Nazis upon the Jews, but before it had specific, visual, first-hand proof of the atrocities of the concentration camps, of Buchenwald, Belsen, Auschwitz and the others, of the mass killings in the gas chambers, the burnings in ovens, the cold systematic murder of six million people. Already there seems to be a determined effort to forget this, and some people are even saying that the German is really a nice fellow at heart when you get to know him, but misunderstood, and he will certainly be a valuable and reliable ally against those Russians, so we'd better butter 'em up and overlook their pranks and they'll be good democrats forever and a day.

There is plenty of guilt in the world, but it is not Jewish guilt. Jews, nevertheless, will continue to apologize, to defend themselves, to worry about any infraction of any law or any code by any Jew. But there is no need to apologize for one's self or

others, nor has there ever been. Let the guilty apologize, if apology means anything.

I am glad that I have lived to see the founding of the state of Israel. One of the old anti-Semitic complaints was: "You never see Jews as farmers, or mechanics, or soldiers; they always find something easier." (Quite a lot of non-Jews like "something easier" too, but that usually isn't ground for criticism.) In the days of general European discrimination against the Jews they were barred from the guilds of manual workers, from work on the land, and from the army; they did only whatever they were permitted to do, gained proficiency and success at it and continued with it; nevertheless they were condemned for not doing what they were not allowed to do. But here is a new nation of farmers, mechanics, soldiers, who have given a very good account of themselves in all these departments. Their reclamation and fructifying of the desert is an epic of hard, back-breaking, dedicated toil. Their industrial personnel has worked wonders. Their army of defense has met the test of battle and would be a credit to any nation.

As the British Labor Member of Parliament R. H. S. Crossman said, writing from Palestine to the London *New Statesman and Nation*: "Starting from the fatal illusion that the Arab armies could easily overwhelm the Jews, our Palestine policy (Britain's) has been based on the foundation of a myth, buttressed by prejudice which now threatens

to destroy our whole Middle East position. . . . Arab leaders complain that Britain first encouraged them into this campaign, in which they were spectacularly defeated, then backed down half-way. Arab bitterness against Britain, as I found after talking the whole morning with notables in occupied Nazareth, is even stronger than the Jewish bitterness.

"The removal of the huge Palestine administration (Britain's) has produced not the expected chaos, but more law, order and civil liberty than the population has enjoyed since the Arab revolt in 1936. Most remarkable here, despite the appalling strain of a war in which the front line is nowhere more than thirty miles away, is the absence of tension in everyday life. . . .

"With the removal of the Police State, into which the Mandate had degenerated, the nation has emerged equipped with civil and military administration; sea, road and rail transport, and full-scale social services—the whole equipment of a Western Europe Socialist State.

"May 15th faced Israeli with three tasks, each of which separately seemed, even to them, too big to tackle. First, to win the war as a nation of 800,000 against six nations with forty million. Second, while winning the war, to create a state out of chaos deliberately created by the evacuating authority. Third, while winning the war and building the State, to bring in and settle 130,000

new immigrants in one year, thus increasing the population by 15 per cent. Israel has done all three. When you ask how it was done you are simply told: 'We had our secret weapon—no alternative.'

"This, indeed, is the whole truth. . . . No one conceived it possible or desirable to build Israel unaided by British friendship. Only because Bevin compelled them, have these people made Churchill's 1940 speeches literal truth. They have fought on the beaches and in the streets. . . . In the first phase of the war the unfortunate Arab masses, on the orders of their own leaders, and assisted by the British Army, fled to neighboring countries, hoping to return behind the victorious armies after two weeks. . . . Only in the areas recently conquered by the Jews have Arabs disobeyed the evacuation order, staying behind when the armies fled. Thus, British policy has inadvertently fulfilled Weizmann's claim at the Versailles Conference of 1919, that Palestine should become as Jewish as England is English. Seventy thousand Arabs who remained in Israel have been granted full Jewish wage rates and have put forward four party lists for the elections on January 25th. Earning higher wages, living freely, this Arab minority is now the envy of all the neighboring countries and the illegal immigration of Arabs into Israel has now begun.

"After traveling in this country I find it sheerest nonsense to talk about Jewish aggression or im-

perialism. These people have been fighting, outnumbered and out-equipped, against six invading armies, for the bare right to exist. . . . From this war, forced on them by deliberate British policy, Israel has emerged as the one constructive force in the Middle East, a twentieth-century socialist state in the midst of the Middle Ages.”

Thus Mr. Crossman, who knew Palestine first as a British member of the Anglo-American Commission of 1947 which surveyed the Palestine situation and recommended unanimously the partition and the statehood of Israel (a recommendation which Mr. Bevin, who appointed the British members, refused to accept).

After more than two thousand years Israel returns to nationhood. It seems a miracle—a miracle marked by indomitable toil, sacrifices, countless disappointments and betrayals, the broken promises and power intrigues of great nations, an endless series of higher chicaneries, the bloodshed of war. And yet a miracle it is. I rejoice for Israel and pray for its welfare.

XVIII

CAMPS AND SCHOOLS

WHEN I was still able to get about, it used to be a regular habit of mine to take a walk over to West Fifty-eighth Street, between Fifth and Sixth Avenues, and stroll leisurely up the block. And every summer on June 30th, I always had a rendezvous with my memory at the Grand Central Station.

No. 44 West Fifty-eighth Street was where I established my school for girls forty-eight years ago. And Grand Central Station on June 30th is annually the scene of that most poignant spectacle—the thousands of little children going away to camps, many for the first time—the partings with parents and relatives, the anxious bustling, scurrying, checking and re-checking, the fear that a child might be lost—then the march of the little children, many of them bewildered, towards the track gates and onto the trains—it is one of the most moving, heart-touching sights I know. *Partir, c'est un peu mourir*, and these first partings, with their anxieties and fears, represent the beginning of that pattern in life of the separation of the

loved ones—a pattern which leads inexorably to final separation, the basic tragedy of living.

I have seen it many times. Schools and camps—these were the activities we chose for our livelihoods—I, my son George, and two of my sisters—and it was a life of devotion, solicitude, anxiety. It is a great responsibility to be entrusted with the minds and bodies of the growing generation. To many, particularly in these latter years, it has become simply a means of profit, virtually an industry. To the Kohuts and Bettelheims it was a labor of love, a constant effort to maintain the highest standards possible, a dedication to the principle that our work was not simply the provision of instruction and recreation; unless we made better citizens, better Americans in the process, our work had failed.

My first activity in this field was the Kohut School for Girls, which I established in 1901 in West Fifty-eighth Street. In its founding I had the close advisory help of two of the greatest educators in the land—Julia Richman, for whom one of our best public high schools in New York was named long ago; and Dr. Henry M. Leipziger, who created the system of night schools for working people in New York and the free lecture system in New York public schools. I had other and equally distinguished help on matters outside the curriculum.

The school flourished from the start. George,

then in his early twenties, had begun a career as a rabbi in Dallas, Texas, but ill health had forced him to give it up. Having recovered somewhat, he undertook to teach German, Latin and history at the school, and to officiate at religious services. He was my partner in the school. This was not his only activity. He also became assistant librarian of the Jewish Theological Seminary, principal of the Religious School of Temple Emanu-El, and director of the Emanu-El Brotherhood (a post he retained for thirty years). He was actually busier than he had been in the rabbinate, but a strengthened constitution enabled him to carry on better.

The Kohut School was not only successful but it was a great satisfaction, in the consciousness that useful work was being done, that the curriculum was of the best, and that the curriculum was thoroughly communicable to the pupils through the excellent teaching staff. I made lasting friendships with many of my girls, a number of whom still communicate regularly with me—most of them grandmothers by now.

My one difficulty was that with all this I was never able to live up to the standards that the pupils' parents set for me as principal. I still think it amazing how many of them felt they knew more about running a school than I did. However, I was always patient and always willing to learn from them.

The school was for both resident students and

day students, and since I lived and slept there, away from my family, it was a seven-day seven-night job. Originally it had been undertaken as a means of supporting the Kohut family, but in effect it was serving to separate me from the family. They lived just a few doors away, but already, because of my preoccupations, they were fast becoming strangers to me.

That was one of the reasons why eventually I gave the school up, at the peak of its success. I had not time for the family, which was breaking up. The two eldest girls, Gisela and Helen, were already married and now two more were married, Valerie and Margaret. That left Elizabeth and the three boys, George, Louis and Eugene at home, and I was not partaking very much in their lives and problems—of which assuredly they had many.

Further, George was getting restive, and rightly. He was my partner in the school, but it was I who dominated it. I am afraid that in my pride, in my eagerness to make good in everything, particularly in my desire to show that I was a do-er in my own right, quite apart from having been the wife of a distinguished spiritual leader and scholar, I let my ego take hold, and it became a matter of "my school," "my students," "my buildings," and other expressions that must have been wounding to a sensitive young partner who was also a son.

A psychological barrier was developing between

us. When I realized what had happened, that George was plainly dissatisfied and unhappy, and that I had somehow run away with things—when I woke up to all that, I was unhappy too, and decided I must choose between the family and the school, and I chose the family.

When it was learned that I was giving up the school, there were a great many bids from people who were eager to obtain control of such a successful institution. I did not accept the highest offer, but sold it instead to a successor who, I was certain, would seek to maintain its ideals and standards.

So, after five intensive and gratifying years, I was a schoolmarm no longer. I did not retire into inactivity; rather, I gave more of my time and energy to the communal and social work which I had never wholly relinquished even in the busiest times. And George's release from the whole school situation worked wonders for him. He did everything with zest, and although he had plenty of cultural activities to occupy him he devoted himself especially to the finding of a suitable livelihood.

About that time my sisters, Cyd and Eva, had founded the Tripp Lake Camp for Girls at Poland, Maine. Maine was the newly discovered, newly developed playground for people of the Eastern Seaboard, and my sisters' camp was one of the first established there. Although it gave my sisters a splendid livelihood, it has never been exploited

commercially, as so many other camps have been. Cyd, at eighty, still runs it. Today, after forty-four years, it is perhaps the outstanding camp for girls in the United States. It usually has a three-year waiting list, and for the last four years it has boasted an unusual feature—it has had among its girl campers the grandchildren of the girls who were its first campers. This past summer the attendance included twenty-eight grandchildren of the first year's campers.

We were all naturally interested in this new enterprise and watched it closely and lovingly. George began going up to Maine, was entranced with the country there, and now that he was free of the school he started thinking of a camp for boys. He found what he considered an ideal place, a lovely island in Casco Bay called Hope Island. In 1907 he opened Camp Kohut there.

It was lovely indeed but, as it proved, not at all ideal for a boys' camp. There was no beach, the water was too deep and too cold for boys learning to swim; there were clammy sea fogs that kept out the sunshine, and the fogs made things dangerous for boys venturing out in the bay in boats.

Two boys in sailboats were lost in the fog one day, and there was a harrowing afternoon and night as they did not return. Luckily they had drifted over to Peary Island, the home of Admiral Peary, discoverer of the North Pole, and were safe. The Admiral put them up for the night.

While the camp was in agony, the boys were having a royal time. They had a feast with Admiral Peary, sat by the fireplace as he told them tales of his explorations.

He roused them in the early morning, gave them a hearty breakfast. The fog was still heavy. Admiral Peary did not want to wait for it to lift, as he knew how worried everyone must be at Camp Kohut. So he took the boys in his motor boat and headed through the fog for Hope Island and Camp Kohut, sailing by compass. It was quite an experience for the boys to be passengers in a vessel in which the crew, skipper and bosun were all Admiral Peary. And it was quite a relief for the camp when they appeared. The Admiral had been a good Bay neighbor before that incident, and now he was enshrined in the hearts of everyone as The Great Rescuer. The Admiral made many visits to the camp after that, even when it moved to the mainland, and became a veritable camp idol.

Hope Island, evidently, was not the place, and the next year the camp moved to a beautiful location near Oxford, Maine—two hundred and fifty acres of pine forest and meadows fronting on Thompson Lake—one of the loveliest lakes in Maine and the world. Here Camp Kohut had a new and better start.

George proved to be a very successful camp director, but he did not fit at all into the popular conception of such a role. He did not go in for

rah-rah, up-and-at-'em, rise and shine, cold showers, dips in the lake, and all the rest. He had fine athletic councilors with rippling muscles and the proper Spartan spirit, and he let them be the rugged examples. As for himself, he shunned physical exertion, avoided sunburn as a deadly enemy, disliked rowing, preferred a tub to the lake, and liked nothing better than to hide somewhere for a few minutes with a good book.

This behavior was not at all the kind that the camp's councilors advocated as the sure method for becoming a model boy. But then, George was not trying to be a model boy, or a boy. He was already thirty-one years old, and it was too late to arrest his development and bring it back to the age of fourteen.

Just the same, he was always the most popular person in the camp, because the boys could take any problems they had to him, anything that worried them, and be sure of getting intelligent, kindly help and direction. He did concern himself with mental and spiritual guidance, and he gave them something that, I believe, is rare in boys' camps: something to think about. Perhaps the boys wanted to develop their mental muscles as well as their biceps. In any case, he encouraged friendship and frank speaking, and they respected him not because he was an authority but because they knew him as their friend.

In the twenty-odd years that he was associated

with the camp, he was the friend of hundreds of boys, and he was, in a sense, a substitute summer father for them.

The first campers liked Camp Kohut so much that they wished they could extend such pleasant relationships into the winter and spring months; they wished there were a boys' school in New York that they could enjoy as much as they enjoyed this summer camp. It was they who put the idea into George's head that he ought to found a school.

Once the idea took root, George went to work on it. He bought a school—at that time the only Jewish boarding school for boys in America—and ran it for one year as a trial. He decided that a city location was not the thing for a boys' school, did not permit enough freedom of movement. After looking about in the countryside, he came upon something very near New York—the estate of Samuel D. Babcock at Riverdale.

The estate was on a hill sloping down to the Hudson River. On top of the hill was the old Babcock mansion, with large verandas, many large and comfortable rooms. Further down was a great red brick building, originally designed as a barn or stable. George's eye ran over all the possibilities. The red brick building could be converted into an ideal schoolhouse. The mansion above would make a perfect dormitory. The site, with its view of the Hudson, left little to be desired. George bought it

and went to work to remake it into the dream school.

Riverdale has since become a very popular location for private schools. George's school was the first there, just as his camp was one of the early boys' camps in Maine. There came later to Riverdale the Riverdale School for Boys, the Barnard School, the Ethical School, and the Horace Mann School.

From the day it opened the school was a success. There were so many pupils that he soon had to build an annex to the school building. I was asked by George to be House Mother, and House Mother I was for four years. Now the situation was reversed. It was George's school and I was a subordinate. It did me so much good to see George blossoming out with executive capacities that I was happy for him, and always curbed any temptations I might have had to give advice unless it was asked. I liked being a subordinate, and I loved living in Riverdale, where I found some friends of earlier days, including Grace Dodge, head of the Young Women's Christian Association, with whom I had worked in East Side welfare work around the turn of the century.

George kept the school until 1916, when the strain of its management began to tell on him. He turned it over to two faculty members, and decided to give more of his time to the Kohut Foundation, which he had recently established.

When the United States entered the World War George was beyond fighting age; he tried nevertheless to enlist and was rejected because of his health. He returned to the Riverdale school to substitute for the head master, who had been drafted. He remained until the end of the war, after which he had no further connection with the school.

He was through with schools, he felt; his writings and his work for the Foundation occupied him happily. But in 1920 he was offered something that he could not resist.

As a boy on Beekman Place going every day to public school, he had always looked longingly at a certain private school in East Fifty-first Street. It was the famous Columbia Grammar School, founded in 1763 by the governing body of King's College, now Columbia University. Boys who could study there, George felt, must be particularly favored and lucky—very lordly creatures they were in his imagination.

In its long history it had had many changes of location and many administrations, and in 1864 it ceased to have any further supervision by the trustees of Columbia College and continued its life independently. For the fifty years preceding 1920 the school's dominant figure was Dr. Benjamin H. Campbell, who came in as instructor in 1868 and remained fifty years to become famous as one of the best, wisest, most sympathetic educators in the land.

In 1920 Dr. Campbell wanted to retire. He did not wish merely to sell the school in the open market; he wanted it to go only into the hands of one who would be certain to uphold its ideals and traditions. Through a mutual friend he made contact with George and had a talk with him.

Dr. Campbell said: "Here is a school that was started one hundred and forty-seven years ago. It is a school that has meant a great deal to the city of New York. It is possibly the oldest boys' school in the country. It is a private school, but it is a public trust. I want to put it in worthy hands and I want it kept in worthy hands."

"But why have you sought me out?" George asked.

"Because I knew your father when the school was in Fifty-first Street. I knew him as one of the great scholars of the day, one of the great gentlemen. Because I knew him, I have always been interested in your own career. I have followed with interest your founding of the Kohut School at Riverdale, and I have heard exceptional reports about the success of Camp Kohut. I confess I have made extensive inquiries about you and your activities. I know that if you take the Columbia Grammar School it will be in the best of hands."

George took it. Columbia Grammar School aimed to take boys from the kindergarten to college. He modernized the building, built up the library to five thousand volumes, put in a fine

swimming pool, and added special facilities for health services for the pupils. It already had an excellent teaching staff and George added to it. One new teacher whom I have already mentioned in an earlier chapter was Fiorello H. La Guardia.

The "progressive school" movement was sweeping the country then. George was not one for sticking completely to the old or for going overboard for the new. His method in education was to keep the best of the old essentials and take the best of the "progressive" system. He believed in tradition when it was not hidebound, and he believed in progressivism when it was not silly or wild.

The years at the Columbia Grammar School comprised one of the most stimulating periods of his life. As I have said, he had thought he was all through with schools until Columbia Grammar came along. And a good many years earlier I too thought I was all through with schools. But on December 31, 1933, George died during the night. For the next two years I was the administrator of Columbia Grammar School. It was a difficult task to undertake at the age of seventy but I did the best I could.

I see schoolhouses as I lie here, a succession of them, and I see camps, and I see the Grand Central Station buzzing with excitement on Camp Going Day. And I am glad that these experiences have been part of the fabric of my life.

XIX

FINAL REFLECTIONS

I CAME in with the telegraph and am going out with television. I crossed the continent by train in ten days in 1875; the same voyage is now negotiated in ten hours by air. The promotion of international misunderstandings used to take weeks and months; now it is achieved in a few hours. Lovers used to spend most of their time at the writing desk; now they are constantly at the telephone, and the future will see a dearth of that hitherto immortal branch of literature—the great love letter. The telephone has not only accelerated romances; it has blighted as many as it has helped.

One of the great books of the Eighteen-nineties was Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, in which most of these inventions we are now using were foreseen. They seemed miraculous and incredible in the reading then; in the actual now they are still miraculous but we have plenty of reservations about these miracles; we know that material science is a two-edged thing which often brings a curse on humanity as well as a blessing. Planes bring bombs. Radio brings crime serials for children.

The line of least resistance is often the line of most resistance to the welfare of humanity. Nuclear fission offers potentialities for both life and death. Which potentiality are most people thinking of first? Which potentiality receives greater priority? It is easier to get a Congressional appropriation for rockets than for a fight against cancer.

If one-twentieth the amount spent on material science were spent on human science, we would have a universe we could be more proud of. And what a wonderful thing it would be if, with every new invention of communications, there were some kind of halt so that the human mind could catch up with it and be able to use it for its best purposes.

They say that every miracle of speedier communications makes the world smaller. But not necessarily better. Radio in itself is a wonderful medium, but in its use as an instrument for propaganda, dissension, hysteria, strife-breeding, it has diminished the world to the proportions of an Eastern bazaar filled with frantic rumor runners. Today's Jules Verne character is a propaganda minister who sends his political poison around the world in eighty seconds.

This bedroom I live in is in effect my world; sometimes its walls expand so that I am abroad in endless space; sometimes they contract so as to crush me. One moment a vast concourse, the next a nut-cracker. I call out for my nurse: "Please help me! Please adjust me, make me more comfort-

able." And then I call out to the world: "Please watch out where you're going. Danger ahead! Please adjust yourself."

It's all very silly, of course, but if one can't get across the floor of a room one thinks of circumnavigating the globe. If one can't advise one's grandchildren, one thinks naturally of lecturing statesmen. Not that they are not in need of lectures.

This book may not mean very much, except that it has helped me to fill in some time in the ante-room, and has given me the pleasure of recollection and of airing opinions. After a long life—too long—death holds little terrors for me. The best that I can say for myself is that I have loved people, have had no time or inclination for hate, and have tried within my limitations to be helpful to others. I particularly hold to the fact that I always tried to get jobs for people, and I hope someone gives me a job in the Hereafter.

If the job were an assignment, however, to make a report on the world I had just left, I know I would be in difficulties. I would have to say, perhaps, that it was both wonderful and terrible, that it faces greater disasters than ever before, and that these can only be stayed by the human heart becoming strong and wise enough to curb the passions of politics and the games of statecraft. An awakening of religious spirit—and by that I don't mean merely the denominational spirit. To put it into

primary school terms, religion is multiplication. Denominationalism is division and subtraction.

My own life, for all its failings, has been abundant, and its development was possible only in such a land as America. No land is perfect, but America is certainly the best of all—not because of its wealth but because of its spirit. I dread to see that spirit lost—lost through intense factionalism, the corruption of ideals which frequently comes with the exercise of power. I would like to see America strong, but with forbearance.

We have sharp differences everywhere with a Power which has few scruples, much corruption, and which falsely represents itself as the champion of the under-privileged when it is the champion only of its own desire for dominance. A Power which professes to be international but simply uses internationalism outside its borders for its own national imperialist purposes.

In many areas inhabited mainly by the under-privileged, its propaganda has had much success among people who have no basis for comparison. After all, these people don't know the Russians, have not had them previously as their imperialist masters, and don't know what they are capable of in the way of trickery and oppression. They do, however, know the imperialists they *have* had over them—the British, Dutch and so forth. When these same imperialists urge them not to heed the Communist sirens but to enlist on the side of de-

mocracy—a word they do not know and a condition they have not been permitted to experience—some of the under-privileged cannot help but make the mistake of thinking that democracy must be another fancy word for imperialism. Perhaps they are not impressed with its necessity for them.

We stand in great danger from Communism, and one of the greatest dangers is that in combating a system without scruples we may be tempted to drop some of our own scruples. In that event we will have lost, for we will have become like the thing we oppose.

The triumph of America is not that it is stronger than anything on earth, but that it is freer.

It is understandable that we seek allies against Communism and that these allies are not necessarily of the same moral caliber as ourselves.

During the American Revolution we eagerly accepted the help of Louis XVI against the English, and Louis was much more of a tyrant than was the English tyrant we were combating, but he wasn't the tyrant who was threatening us. When he gave the help Louis was not interested in establishing freedom and the Rights of Man in America, but simply in lessening the power of his English enemy. Ironically enough, the success of the American Revolution led to the success of the French Revolution which beheaded Louis. In any case, the Americans were justified in obtaining

whatever aid they could at that time, and are justified now.

However, the world is smaller now and things react upon each other much quicker. Communism is not the only menace, and, just as in the days of Hitler and Mussolini, there is a possibility of Rightist police states as well as Left. Rightist reactionaries are just as opposed to individual liberty as are the men of Moscow, and Rightist reactionaries are taking full advantage under the cover of the anti-Communist drive to strengthen and further their own ends.

It is not enough to be against Communism. One must be for honesty and democracy.

We happen to have certain states on our side whose only advantage is that they profess anti-Communism; in themselves they are corrupt and reactionary. But some people seem to feel that these states, simply because they are anti-Communist, must be lauded and idealized as if they were honest and heroic defenders of liberty. Nonsense! If we need them, we need them. But we don't have to be hypocrites about it.

Or our own role will become meaningless to us, and the way be paved for our own reactionaries, all speaking of freedom and liberty and all doing their mightiest to suppress it.

So many people whom I loved and admired have already left this world that there ought to be

no anguish and struggle at the leaving of it for me, and I nurse the hope that I am rejoining all these people.

One becomes a stranger, anyway, in a half-world of neither here nor there, and there are moments when I don't know whether I am an irresolute lingerer in an old milieu, or a dazed visitor in a new one. My grandchildren are affectionate, but they speak to me slowly and academically, as if I were a nice foreign visitor who can understand only simple things. Among themselves the younger ones speak rapidly and in a language all their own, in which such gibberish as hep, hubba-hubba and bebop abound. They remind me of an earlier generation going mad over skedoo and ishkabibble—terms I was even then too old to appreciate.

These children are much freer than I was—whether happier I don't know. America in my youth did not yet have the cult of the young. Parents were still authorities, not old fogies, and it was assumed that they knew a thing or two about what was right or wrong; and they were generally obeyed without their having to go into a tantrum. This is nowadays a minority opinion and unfashionable too—it is customary to assume that parents of the Seventies, Eighties, Nineties were all stuffy, stupid people dedicated to hampering and even persecuting their poor, sensitive, misunderstood

and imprisoned children. How different the reality!

If the parents had more authority they also had, in my opinion, more capacity for it, and a greater sense of responsibility. Perhaps they knew fewer things, but they were also less confused. Or am I romanticizing the past too much? I don't think so.

I loved "Life with Father" and regret that I could not see "Life with Mother." Much new literature has appeared about the period of my childhood, youth and early womanhood—mostly what is called "escapist" literature—but I have not had the persistence or the desire to read much of it. When one's memory is crowded with images, one doesn't really have the room for additional imaginary characters who do not have the proportions and pulsations of life.

I imagine most of these books are written by young men and women who have made a few visits to the reference room of the library and who are trying to be quaint. However, they are 1950 quaint, not 1880 quaint. And then these books always have Sex. I am too old for Sex. In fact, I was always too old for Sex with a capital S.

When I think of the furore about Tolstoy's *Kreutzer Sonata* and *Resurrection*, because he dared mention sexual acts in them, and when I think of what is taken for granted in books today, I can only say that I have lived in two separate literary worlds.

Tolstoy once said that though his heart was with the masses he had to admit that literature had gone to pot since the masses had learned to read. He declared that he was a great enemy of aristocracy in art, but nevertheless, in the time when the few wrote and the few read, the literature was of a higher order. I don't know whether that is permanently so or not—the masses have been literate for too short a time for one to be able to judge—give them a few hundred years.

Just the same, when I think of all the publications today, all the cheap reprints and comic books by the millions, all the hundred-page Sunday newspapers with their great circulations—I think inevitably of the acres and miles of forests that must be denuded every week to make this possible—and I wonder how long it can go on.

I remember President Roosevelt's forest conservation program, with its emphasis on the fact that the trees are needed to keep the soil in place and prevent making a desert of the land. And I see the miles of forests being cut down and fed into the printing presses, and the products looked at briefly and thrown away.

President Roosevelt never said anything about conserving forests by reading less.

It is really a paper world. The bureaucracies alone, with their myriads of paper forms for everything—especially the European bureaucracies—what forests must be consumed in their

names. The propaganda bureaus with their vast outpourings of printed matter—what a tree slaughter for that! The various pressure groups here, there and everywhere, determined to fill whatever mail-boxes exist with their special pleadings—the hate merchants with their inked venom—the direct-by-mail advertisers, the newspapers, the magazines—for them the murmuring pines and the hemlocks, and the cedars of Lebanon.

Perhaps this book isn't necessary either.

I am a paradox—an American born in Hungary, a Zionist who never went to Palestine, a matriarch who never had any children, an educator who was always a pupil. But in my paradox has been my dream, and I think I have become mostly a dream.

I haven't long to dream now. It would be pleasant simply to sleep, but I am awake most of the time, and when I am awake and idle I worry. Each time I awake it is with a start, with a feeling that I have much to do and that I had better get up right away and do it. And then I realize where I am and how I am, and that I am not getting up. I never get used to it, and each time I have to make a special effort to organize myself into something—prayer, or reminiscence or the like. In addition to all the prayers I know I have thought up dozens of new ones—enough to fill a large prayer book, and the curious thing is that I remember them—

remember them far better than I do the happenings and people of my life. Reminiscence is still, as at the beginning, a far from orderly thing, a hazardous grab-bag, from which I may take out a face from 1870, a word from 1880, an incident from the turn of the century, a meeting from the Coolidge era, a weary smile from the Troubled Thirties, and try to put them all together.

So many people I have forgotten to mention—and at a certain time mentioning becomes important—a name, names—they are all one has.

I can never pay enough tribute to Dr. Leopold Stieglitz, ever my dear friend and physician.

I like to remember Dr. Ralph Marcus of the University of Chicago, who is carrying out the work on the *Lexicon of Josephus* begun years ago by Dr. H. St. John Thackeray.

Dr. Paul Rieger, a fellow student of George, like Alexander Marx, Stephen Wise and Leo Baeck.

Professor Shalom Spiegel of the Jewish Institute of Religion, who is Secretary of the Foundation.

Senator Robert F. Wagner, whom I have known since he was on the New York State Factory Investigating Committee after the Triangle fire of 1911.

Jeanne Tonkonogy, whom I taught at the Educational Alliance more than forty years ago and who has been my friend ever since.

Anne Morgan, with whom I have served on various committees.

Rabbi Jonah Wise of the Central Synagogue, formerly the Ahawath Chesed, which was the synagogue for which my husband was rabbi.

Celia Strakosch, who did such splendid work in Rotterdam for the Council of Jewish Women's Reconstruction Committee after the First World War. And Elinor Sachs-Barr, who succeeded with a very difficult task in the Reconstruction Committee's center at Riga, Latvia.

Professor Louis Finkelstein, president of the Jewish Theological Seminary.

I always come back to Professor Charles C. Torrey of Yale, because of his great work as an Orientalist and because of his friendship for George and for me.

With admiration I think of Senator Herbert H. Lehman, who has done so much for good government, for the hapless victims of wars, and for his own people. He took a great and leading part in the relief of war victims after the First World War, and his experience then made him an almost inevitable choice to direct the great work of UNRRA during and after the Second World War. In between these wars he made an enviable record as the Governor of New York State and was a source of friendship and inspiration to all who knew him.

Pleasant is any recollection of George Parmlee

Day, treasurer emeritus of Yale University, who has always been so helpful and cooperative in the work of the Kohut Foundation. He served as one of the trustees of the Kohut Foundation, and he was one of the reasons why we have always had such fond thoughts of Yale.

Dr. James Babb, who is Librarian of Yale, is one too whose name is cherished as a scholar, guide and friend.

The corner of Yale which holds my heart is the Alexander Kohut Memorial Collection, which contains all the books of my husband and my son, and that is presided over by Dr. Leon Nemoy, to whom I am always grateful. It is a living monument of living books actively used, and Dr. Nemoy looks after them with the loving care that scholars always give to books. I am especially proud that some of Dr. Nemoy's own great contributions to scholarship are included in the publications of the Kohut Foundation and the Yale Oriental Series.

For more than forty years I have prized the friendship and esteemed the work of Dr. Alexander Marx, professor and librarian of the Jewish Theological Seminary and the present head of the Kohut Foundation. With George he was a student of the fabulous Steinschneider in Berlin, and since his arrival in the United States in the early days of the century he has always been close to us. In these latter years, when I have been unable personally to occupy myself with the Foundation's affairs, Dr.

Marx's direction has been a comfort and an inspiration. At the present time he is seeing through to publication some very important works, and I hope the Foundation will long enjoy his wise and energetic direction.

So many other friends and associates, and I wish I had time and space to list them all.

While I have life I can never forget my nurse, Mrs. MacGregor. She has patiently put up with me all these years, has understood whims and the unreasonableness of the sick, has been both tender and firm with me. I, the ancient matriarch, have been her child, and there must have been times when she found me a very difficult one.

There is still one thrill I get. That is when I see a child. I don't see very many; only when someone brings one. When that happens, I become indescribably joyous; the atmosphere becomes pink and I virtually hear the harps playing. I suppose it has something to do with reassertion of the continuity of life, an assurance that things will go on whether I am present in the flesh or not. The child is I going on into the future.

It is really a mystical spiritual feeling, and if old people could see enough young children it would lighten considerably the burdens of their last hours. There is a kinship, anyway, between the very old and the very young.

Just as I am happy about children, I cannot help also being concerned for them. I have seen a child

and am radiant, could sing if I had any voice left to sing with. Then it goes out and I am desolate, cut off, without a future. I begin worrying. What sort of a life will the child have? What happiness and disasters is the world preparing for it? That leads me to the subject of the world, and I say to myself: Won't anybody do anything about the world, make it a better place for the children growing up? A safer place? A happier place? In that mood I find myself filling with despair, and becoming an old busybody likely to tell most anyone what's wrong with everything and what ought to be done to mend it.

I have such concerns now, when I ought to be dropping off to sleep and unawareness. Does it make any sense? I have lived my life. On the surface the world can neither help nor hurt me any more, and besides has no interest in me, nor in other aged persons about to shuffle off this mortal coil. And yet I persist in being interested in the world, as if it could still produce miracles during the little time that I can still watch it.

And it *has* produced miracles, right in the midst of despair. The state of Israel, emerging under the most impossible conditions with almost everything against it, is one. And there are others. Only two years ago we saw the strange spectacle of an entire electorate which was convinced that the Democratic candidate, President Truman, had no chance whatever to win the election. And yet the majority

of that electorate had voted for him, each individual voter feeling that he was casting his ballot for a sure loser. No one was more surprised than these same voters. It was a complete refutation of the idea that Americans always flock to the coming winner, that we stampede to the side of the top-dog.

It was one of the most refreshing things that had happened in years. I am sure it must have even been a refreshing and stimulating occurrence to the defeated candidate, Governor Dewey, although partisan political decorum might keep him from saying so for the record. He might have been defeated and denied the highest office in the land, but even so, he is an American and a splendid one. It must be a satisfaction to him, as to every American, to know that he lives in a land where there is always a chance, where people do not hesitate to vote for the man they think will lose, are not afraid to voice a minority opinion.

That is why I think that Governor Dewey, though personally disappointed for his own ambitions, is no doubt secretly pleased for the nation's welfare. It may, of course, imbue him with the feeling that nothing could be better than to be the president of such a great people—may inspire him to try again. In that event, if I were still here, I would certainly vote for him, out of admiration for his courage and persistence in the face of previous defeats—qualities I admire. And I am sure

that, with all this experience and tempered wisdom, he would make a splendid President.

In any case, it is better to be a defeated candidate in a democracy like America than a defeated—or successful—candidate in a country of totalitarian dictatorship.

The more I think of it, the more I am led to realize that there are plenty of signs of miracles, if we would only recognize them as such.

It is a miracle that, when abused by the propagandists of the Soviet Union, we do not answer them with the same kind of abuse. That, while determined to make ourselves as strong as possible, we avoid provocation.

It is a miracle that avowed Communist leaders can avail themselves of all the liberties of legal defense provided for all citizens by the American courts.

It is a miracle that venal rabble-rousers finally become discredited even by those who listen to them.

It is a miracle that Americans contribute not only out of their largesse but out of their necessities for the unfortunate in other countries.

It is a miracle that we are not narrowly chauvinistic but accept and make use of all the diversified talent that comes to our shores.

What's so miraculous about that, you may ask. That is just ordinary American behavior.

Exactly. And that is why it is miraculous. Because America is the everyday miracle.

True, there are people who disagree. On the one hand, we have those who complain because America isn't 100 per cent perfect, and therefore they won't accept any of it. They want something that has never existed on land, sea or in the air, and I doubt that they exact such perfection from themselves in their own lives.

And on the other hand, we have those who resent democracy. Not everyone in this land is a democrat, just as, I am sure, not every Russian is a Communist at heart. All nations have all types co-existing simultaneously, from the pre-historic to the post-atomic. The job is in maintaining the balance for the greatest good.

I have seen the Neanderthal Man in New Jersey driving a bus, and I have seen the Utopian Man in California managing a superior nut ranch.

We are all members of one family—often a factional and quarreling family—and then there are families within families, until it finally gets down to one's own flesh and blood. Of my Bettelheim family only my sister Cyd and I survive. Cyd means so many things to me, in herself and in what she represents. She was my joy in early days of happiness, and is my comfort and strength in these times.

In my Kohut family there are six children and

numerous grandchildren and even great-grandchildren, and they surround me with their love, solicitude and protection. Each Sunday afternoon, when so many of them gather in my room for a reunion, is a reaffirmation of how I love them and they love me. I am glad to have been in their lives, as they in mine. Although I think myself as American as any, I go back in time and space to Mid-Nineteenth Century Europe, but the Kohut family—children and grandchildren—have their roots in Twentieth Century America proudly, and they are worthy in every respect of the great land of which they are part. May they always have in their beings the inner and outer grace they possess.

An American woman, I have also been called "A Mother in Israel," and I cling to both designations with the utmost pride. My prayers go out for all American women and their children—and for all mothers in Israel—and their children.

I know I have been very garrulous in my wakefulness. But silence will come with sleep.

ADDENDA

Statement of

THE ALEXANDER KOHUT MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

(first published, 1928)

In memory of DR. ALEXANDER KOHUT, alike distinguished as rabbi, preacher and orientalist (April 22, 1842—May 25, 1894) and widely known through his encyclopedic Talmudic Dictionary, the *Aruch Completum* (Vienna 1878—New York 1892; new edition Wilna 1910-1912, incomplete; photographic reprint of original edition, Vienna 1926); his family, through the initiative of his eldest son, GEORGE ALEXANDER KOHUT, has established a series of Literary Foundations, bearing his name. The primary object of these Foundations is to foster Jewish learning and to make it possible for scholars engaged in original research to publish the results of their investigations.

The first of these Foundations was established in 1915, at Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, and is designated *The Alexander Kohut Memorial Publication Fund*. Under its auspices the Yale University Press has since 1915 issued some notable works, comprising Texts and Researches, edited by members of the Faculty in the Semitic Department, and other volumes are to follow at regular intervals.

There is also an *Alexander Kohut Research Fellowship in Semitics*, annually awarded at Yale, made possible by a special gift in 1919, which has been augmented in 1928, for the purpose of stimulating post-graduate study. The Kohut Library, known as the *Alexander Kohut Memorial Collection*, is likewise deposited at Yale.

In 1922 and 1923 similar *Kohut Foundations* were established, successively, in Vienna, Berlin, Budapest and New York, three of them in affiliation with Jewish institutions of learning, administered by a group of representative scholars, who serve as an Advisory Executive Committee in the selection of the literary material to be published.

There have appeared under the auspices of the *Kohut Foundation* a number of important works by distinguished scholars and among the forthcoming publications are included several significant contributions to Jewish literature, especially dealing with grammar, lexicography, folklore, and the history of religion.

GEORGE ALEXANDER KOHUT

By

DR. LEON NEMOY, Yale University

George Alexander Kohut was born in Stuhlweissenburg, Hungary, on February 11, 1874, as the eldest son of Rabbi Dr. Alexander Kohut, the eminent divine and editor of the monumental Rabbinic encyclopedia *Aruch Completum*. His early childhood years were spent at Stuhlweissenburg and Grosswardein, where he also attended the local secondary schools. In 1885 Dr. Alexander Kohut was called to New York, and as soon as the family was settled there, George Kohut enrolled in the public schools of that city. Upon completion of the course he entered the College of the City of New York, from which he graduated in due time.

A period of illness delayed until 1890 his matriculation at Columbia University; simultaneously he entered the Jewish Theological Seminary, of which his distinguished father was one of the founders and one of the first and most eminent professors.

Among his teachers at both institutions were Professors A. V. Williams Jackson and Richard J. H. Gottheil, and Rabbis Henry Pereira Mendes and Bernard Drachman. At home he served with fervent zeal and devotion as both pupil and amanuen-

sis to his father, and his Biblical studies were supervised by Arnold B. Ehrlich, the eminent author of the *Ranglossen zur hebraischen Bibel*.

Shortly after his father's demise George Kohut went to Berlin, where he became a student at the University and at the Hochschule fur die Wissenschaft des Judentums. At the same time he obtained Moritz Steinschneider's permission to attend his lectures at the Veitel-Heine-Ephraimsche Lehranstalt, and soon became a frequent and beloved visitor at Steinschneider's home. This friendship between the great master and his favorite pupil continued until Steinschneider's death, and was closely matched by the affection which was felt for George Kohut by his other teachers, e.g., Dr. Martin Schreiner, Professor Hayyim Steinthal, and others.

A new attack of illness forced George Kohut to interrupt his studies, and after a rest at Reichenau, near Vienna, he returned in 1897 to New York. The eminent Rabbi Dr. Bernard Felsenthal granted him the rabbinical license, and he immediately received a call to the pulpit of the Congregation Emanu-El at Dallas, Texas. His ministry was blessed from the beginning with complete success, but a serious attack of illness once more forced him to return to New York and to engage in less strenuous work.

In 1906 he returned to the ministry in order to take charge of the Sinai Congregation at Mount Vernon, N. Y., but was forced to resign his pulpit in the following year, again due to ill health.

From 1900 to 1920 he was successively teacher of Latin and German at the Kohut School for Girls, principal of the Religious School of Temple Emanu-El in New York, and assistant librarian of the Jewish Theological Seminary. He founded also Camp Kohut at Oxford, Maine, and the Kohut School for Boys, and managed both with great success for a number of years.

In 1920 he became principal and executive director of the Columbia Grammar School in New York, one of the oldest institutions of its kind in the United States. This position he held to the day of his death, December 31, 1933.

In addition to the Alexander Kohut Memorial Foundation, George Kohut was also one of the founders of the Jewish Institute of Religion in New York, and contributed considerably to its endowment and to the development of its library. In recognition of his services the Institute conferred upon him in 1928 the honorary degree of Doctor of Hebrew Letters. His services to Yale University, one of the oldest seats of Hebrew studies in the United States, are commemorated by a Fellowship in Semitics, a Publication Fund, a Library Fund, a Collection of Judaica, and a Collection of Heineana.

A full bibliography of his writing was published by Edward D. Coleman, Librarian of the American Jewish Historical Society, in the *Jewish Studies in Memory of George A. Kohut*, New York, 1935, pp. xii-xciii.



University of
Connecticut
Libraries



(Continued from front flap)

on which she served from 1915 to 1917. During the first World War she served as Chairman of the Mayor's Committee of Women on National Defense, was the organizer of the U. S. Employment Clearing House, and organized and served as first President of the Federated Employment Bureau for Jewish Girls.

Mrs. Kohut was President of the World Congress of Jewish Women, honorary Vice-President of the National Council of Jewish Women and Honorary President of the New York Section, and Honorary Life President of the International Council of Jewish Women. She has served as Honorary President of the Emanuel Sisterhood and as a member of the executive board of the Bureau of Jewish Social Research, as Vice-President of Vocational Service for Juniors, member of the board of the Josephine Home, and trustee of the American Women's Association.

In addition to her new volume, Mrs. Kohut is the author of *My Portion, As I Know Them* and *His Father's House*.

The author of *More Yesterdays* (1925-1949) was born in Hungary but came to America when quite young and received her education in the public schools and normal school of San Francisco, and later attended the University of California and Columbia University.

She was married to Rabbi Alexander Kohut in 1887 in Baltimore but settled in New York soon after her marriage. She became active in public affairs and was appointed by Mayor Mitchel to serve on the Committee on Unemployment

(Continued on back flap)

